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ESSAY REVIEWS



Yours truly,
SCHUYLER ASHLEY

ESSAY REVIEWS

BY

SCHUYLER ASHLEY

BORN 1897

DIED 1927

INTRODUCTION BY

ROSE ADELAIDE WITHAM

KANSAS CITY
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BY HENRY D. ASHLEY

“Of wounds and sore defeat
I made my battle stay.
Winged sandals for my feet
I wove of my delay.
Of weariness and fear
I made my battle spear.
Of loss and doubt and dread,
And swift on-coming doom
I made a helmet for my head—
And a floating plume.
From the failure of the breath,
I made a battle horn to blow
Across the vales of overthrow.
Oh, hearken, then, the battle horn,
The triumph clear, the silver scorn.
Oh, hearken how the echoes bring,
Down the gray disastrous morn,
Laughter and rallying!”

WILLIAM VAUGHAN MOODY

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INTRODUCTION

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AMONG the many letters which friends of Schuyler Ashley wrote, on the day of his death, to express their love and admiration to his parents, came one from an unknown reader of his reviews in a remote western town. It began—

“I cannot forego the temptation to write you that even in the *hinterland* Schuyler Ashley will be sorely missed, despite the fact that I did not know him personally. My intimation had been that he was an elderly bibliophile . . . and I had ranked him with the veteran reviewers of national reputation.” The words express a quality that always marked him among his contemporaries—he was *age-less*. When he was a little boy, keen-featured, beautifully keen-eyed, dashing here and there with the verve of childhood, he had, all the while, a sense of things, and people, and values that was startlingly mature; and when, during the Great War, he was submitting his spirit to tasks too severe for his hardly established manhood, he kept a humor and love of playing the game that were enchantingly boyish. His younger portraits, as we look at them now, show a trace of manhood—and his latest, made after the ultimate ordeal, hold still a lovely trace of childhood. Besides these, I hold in memory one other unforgettable picture of him that no lens registered. He was saying goodbye to a well-loved uncle who had made a swift visit to him during his last days in Colorado. I remember the stature of the two men, shoulder to shoulder of even height, with the same brave lift of head, the same determined modelling of face, the same steady look. I remember the keen glance that held them together even more than grasped hands. Kinsmen are shy of saying to each other, “I like you, through and through”; but their eyes, approving, may say it for them. These two had talked through many hours, as man with man, and there was no disparity, mental

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or spiritual, between the bishop who had lived his fourscore years and the boy in his twenties. It is possible—and the obvious thing—to say that this quick maturity would come to any lad who had leaped from the shelter of college life into the many-sided exposure of service in the navy with its deadly nightmare, in 1918, of interminable and inexplicable waiting in unknown seas. But, too often, we forget that experience does nothing to ninety-nine people out of a hundred except—to scar them; it neither develops nor enriches them. Schuyler Ashley, however, was always potentially experienced, always rich material for quick development. And so, at any age, he was both old and young. The writer of the letter was discriminating—he *had* been for years reading the reviews of a man who was both under thirty and an “ancient bibliophile.”

The mere outline of Ashley's life, as it will appear in the National Cyclopedia of American Biography will run somewhat as follows. He was born in Kansas City, Missouri, June 2, 1897. He prepared for college in The Country Day School of that city, and entered Williams in 1915. In his Junior year, in March, 1917, he enlisted in the U. S. Navy and first served as Quartermaster on a patrol boat in Boston harbor. In the spring of 1918 he was commissioned Ensign and placed on the U. S. S. Oklahoma, later on the U. S. S. Wyoming in the North Sea. Here, waiting without action, exposed to fog and cold, he contracted pneumonia and was sent to the naval hospital at Leith. He recovered sufficiently to be invalided home for Christmas, 1918, and then ordered to the naval hospital at Fort Lyon, Colorado. As evidences of tuberculosis appeared, he was retired from our navy in June, 1919, and forced to stay in Colorado. For nearly two years he studied and wrote in Boulder. In February, 1921, he made a trip to the South Sea Islands; and in June of that year went to Europe, spending a year at Davos, Switzerland. He returned to Colorado Springs in September, 1922, and became a patient at Cragmor. In the spring of 1926 he was able to leave the sanitarium for Red Top, a fine old estate secured for him as a permanent home out of the city on the higher land of Austin Bluffs. During these latter years he published some verse, many



“A LITTLE BOY, KEEN FEATURED, BEAUTIFULLY KEEN EYED.”

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short stories reminiscent of his sea experiences, and wrote weekly book reviews for *The Kansas City Star*. Here in June, 1926, he married Romaine Anne Felix of Pittsburgh. He died suddenly at Red Top, January 25, 1927. These will be the facts given. But for his friends who read between the lines the brief record should be lettered, as were the illuminated manuscripts of old, within a rich border of crimson, purple, and gold to decorate the high courage of Schuyler Ashley's last years—"the triumph clear, the silver scorn."

The real tragedy of this biography lies in one phrase,—“waiting without action.” He himself always passed over those murky months in the North Sea with a light touch. Heart-breaking as the memory of them will always be to us, they belonged, after all, to his battle for physical life. Now I never think of him as fighting for that, though it must have been sweet to his delicate alert senses. Rather, I remember him fighting for the life of his mind and spirit. It was as if he had said to himself, when forced to accept the limitations of the body: “Very well; so much the farther, then, shall we three fare on together,—my mind, my spirit, and I.” Out of this he fashioned his own kind of contentment. Day after day he lay flat on his back, often with a bag of heavy shot upon his lungs to keep them from normal effort, reading, comparing, thinking,—and then writing the reviews that are gathered into this volume. He finished one the very night he died. They were all written in a high room, open to the sun, looking across the mesa, banded with red poppies and blue lupins, that stretched from Red Top in the foot hills toward the snow covered mountains. It was seclusion indeed—yet he was never out of touch with the world. From the offices of *The Kansas City Star* went to him every week packets of new books; and back to *The Star* regularly went the reviews that his friends, old and young, were waiting for. Invisible, he still lived among them,—and once a week, Saturday evening, whatever social engagement was waiting, they all gathered round, as it were, and listened while he talked to them of books and life.

Mr. Mencken has said that “journalism is hateful in a printed

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book." And the observation has some truth in its acerbity. Had Schuyler Ashley lived even five years longer the printing of these first reviews of his might never have been considered. But those years were denied him. We can, of course, with surety, predict that he would have become an eminent essayist. But we cannot print what he was *going to write*. We can give permanency in these pages only to some of the best of what he did actually publish. There were short stories of his in various magazines, some verse, and a hundred or more reviews to choose from. Since these last represent his most mature and consecutive work, since they became the greatest interest of his last two years and most arrested the attention of readers in the middle west, the decision has been in favor of selecting the reviews and a few poems for this volume. But in making this choice we do not need to apologize to Mr. Mencken. What he meant in his dictum was, of course, not journalism, but *mere* journalism. Schuyler Ashley's reviews are never *mere* journalism. One of his last, of *Whaling North and South*, published the week after his death, was written at the request of Mr. Henry Seidel Canby for The Saturday Review. So it is fair to see how this editor's idea of a journalistic review compares with that of the editor of The Mercury. Nothing could be more opposed. Mr. Canby recognizes in the book review a distinct literary form, entitled to an honorable place among other types of the essay. The fault lies not in the possibilities of reviews themselves, he says, but in the mistaken attitude of most of those who write and who publish them. They look upon them as "the beginner's first chance for publicity," the "accepted padding of the Sunday supplement,"—and so, for the most part, they have deteriorated into "the easy thing to write for one who has nothing to say," the "recreation ground of the literary amateur," "the outlet for stale culture and sterile vanity." Had Mr. Canby felt any of these toxins in the reviews of Schuyler Ashley as he read them in The Star, he would never have requested him to write for his own paper. Instead, he saw that Ashley had standards that lifted his reviews at once into the essay class. We who knew him at close range realized that he always set himself the task of reading all the



QUARTERMASTER, U. S. NAVY, 1917

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books of an author before he would review the one in hand; that often he read broadly in the works of the author's contemporaries to make sound relations and comparisons. Then—and only then—did he feel himself equipped to estimate essential values. He wholly fulfilled Mr. Canby's requirement that "good reviewing is good thinking plus good feeling plus good writing." To this point we may read the first and last paragraph of the only review Ashley had time to do for him:

"Today, though men may not yet 'draw out Leviathan with an hook,' they capture him in abrupt and almost disdainful fashion. From the bows of steam-driven 'whale-chasers' they destroy him with expensive harpoons of one hundred pounds weight; jam, with a long lance, a compressed air-line into his vast side and blow him up; then, tail foremost, tow him into the factory ship, ignominiously, with shorn flukes and white swollen belly staring to the sky. A spirited account of this bustling industry is to be found in F. V. Morley's and J. S. Hodgson's book. These authors are as candid as they are informative; there is little enough in their careful, unembellished pages to substantiate the suggestion (on the jacket) that whaling is a 'high-hearted and romantic pursuit'." Then at the end: "Everything in here save poetry. And even that may some day be discerned again in the life of the men who hunt whales. But it must come from the inside, from an artist who is in a whaler to run a winch, do a trick at the wheel, and stand the cold interminable watches in the barrel. Young Oxford men aboard for a few weeks' stunt will not do; no one knows that better than Mr. Morley whose honest unwillingness to be considered anything but the most casual of observers—('You just go out with some Norwegians and watch them shoot,' he explains)—is charming in a book where he had such a chance for heroic posing. Nor is Hodgson the man to see *Moby Dick* again; he is far too much the absorbed specialist. Perhaps somewhere in a country school in Norway a hulking, big-shouldered young schoolmaster with Ibsen and Knut Hansun in his veins is even now fretting out his days. Some morning in a fit of gloomy impatience he will sign on with the Southern Whaling Fleet. Scowl-

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ing, white-faced, full of what Melville with intimate familiarity used to call 'the hypos', he will watch the shores of his native fiord drift past. What will follow may be safely committed to the knees of the gods." It is all here—good thinking, good feeling, good writing. Surely such journalism is not hateful!

Between March, 1923, and January, 1927, Schuyler Ashley wrote an amazing number of these essays; but the variety of books he reviewed is still more amazing. From lightest love tales to serious philosophies, he ranged with ease, from gossiping anecdotes of the great to stern biographies, from melodrama to psychology, from fantasy to history. The Puck-like swiftness of his mind could put a girdle round the world of letters with unbelievable speed. But, what was most important, each book had a fair judgment according to the laws of its own type—the first essential of just criticism. A knowledge of these laws is, of course, something that may be acquired; but it is a "born gift" to be able to catch the over-tones and under-tones in a book that give it its personality. Mistaking identities in books is as stupid, and as dangerous, as mistaking identities in people. Ashley was never guilty of this blunder. He had an unerring sense of an author's intention, of his starting point, direction, distinction; they were so clearly charted in his own mind that he went *with* the author, page by page, all the way. And a wonderful companion he was for the course, seeing and hearing everything, and sensing all that, though unseen and unheard, was none the less intended and suggested. When most critics were allowing their moral prejudices to condemn Willa Cather's *A Lost Lady*, Ashley quietly protested: "I thought this last book of hers, with its *simplicity* and *restraint*, in its *gentle-voiced recital of a tale which was much too human to be merely sordid*, quite the best thing she has ever done." The others had no ear for the subtle over-tones of that "gentle-voiced recital." I have just re-read eighty or more of Schuyler Ashley's criticisms, and so strongly am I impressed with his full comprehension of what an author is driving at, that, if it were not presumptuous, I would say that there were moments when I felt that I was reading Conrad and Ashley, collaborators, or Inge and



ENSIGN, U. S. S. WYOMING

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Ashley, or Murry and Ashley; at least, it was never Ashley smartly tilting *at* Conrad or Murry, or any others in the long list. Never did he have the hateful manner of a mere appraiser with the auctioneer's hammer raised in his hand.

The second strong impression from this intensive re-reading was of the extraordinary vitality of the reviews. They seem just as much alive today as they were the day they were printed, still persuasive, still convincing me that I should read this or that. Reviews today seem to play two contradictory roles: one is to induce us to read the book; the other is to tell us so much about the book that we need not read it. The second role is a cheap one. Schuyler Ashley never did the cheap thing. He wrote a firm upstanding self-respecting estimate of a book with the plain intention to make us read it for ourselves. Being honest, he did not want to "put anything over" on us. "Read this," he said, "and see what you think. If you do not agree with me, well and good! For there begins new matter—an argument, which I love better than anything else on earth!" No amount of years, or experience, or leadership would have changed this. Always would he have been to us a book-loving comrade, never a literary dictator.

This combination of being intent on telling exactly what he thought, and yet royally indifferent to being agreed with, is, I believe, one evidence of the clear normal healthiness of Schuyler Ashley's mind. There is in all his essays not one querulous word, not one perverted judgment, not one pompous pose or affectation. The weight he held on his chest—even that greater weight on his heart—never disturbed the balance of his mind; whatever the thermometer registered for his body, the temperature of his spirit ran steady. And so he was a cool critic—and that is usually a fair one. Had there only been more time! I sit in church where I read on memorial tablets such names as Cotton, Winthrop, Dudley, Bradford, Adams, Quincy, Brooks, Everett, Emerson. And all these men lived sixty, seventy, eighty, ninety years. The thought gives an aching poignancy to our grief at the waste of youth that war always brings. If only Ashley had had more time!

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And his healthy spirit was matched by something equally healthy and clean even in his bodily invalidism. His friends have often compared his position with that of Stevenson. But I think, had we visited Stevenson in that Samoan house during his last months, we would have felt there the presence of disease and on-coming death. But at Red Top there was no slightest suggestion of either. There medicines, diet, seasons of rest and sleep and work were matters of a doctor's schedule; they were obeyed to the letter, as orders are obeyed by a trained soldier—and then dismissed. The patient—not by a *tour de force* but by a natural easy gesture—kept his own world uninvaded by them. I always felt, when talking with him there, as if his lithe figure might at any moment leap from the bed for a set of tennis or a gallop across the plains. Without lifting his head from his pillow he could give his eye the range of rocky ledges red in the sun, of clumps of young scrub pine, of sandy hummocks bristling with cactus. Among these he chose any target he liked, drew his rifle to his shoulder, and shot straight to the mark. Bodily, as well as mentally, he was a crack shot, hitting the bull's eye every time. This natural healthiness was what kept him from talking of those fortunes of war that had thrown him. Any amount of bitterness could have been forgiven. He might have reasoned: "And all this without ever having seen a battle—just for hanging about in storm and darkness, with the glory of combat always a little beyond our reach—no fighting part for me who of all people love the pageant of action, and loathe deferment and delay!" If he ever thought this, he never said it. In one of his reviews he called the war a "blundering holocaust"—but he made no exhibition of where those fires burned himself.

There must have been somewhere a deeper, more mortal scar than we guessed. For, just when it seemed as if there might be years of careful life ahead, with happy work and deeply happy human ties, he bade his nurse a quiet goodnight—and opened his eyes upon the pageant of Life Beyond. There was not the slightest shadow of passing. So, there as here, he must be still himself, full of zest, interested in all things, fresh, quick, lovable, arresting,

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unpredictable—and ageless. We recall a famous French painter's way of teaching his pupils: he entered the studio where they were all at work, looked about at their canvasses, and, as they waited breathless for his criticism, quietly said, "Continuez, mes enfants," went out and shut the door. It was his highest praise—just to allow them to go on. Schuyler Ashley is surely going on with his essays, stories, and verse. As here he proved himself obedient to "the awful Soul that dwells in clay," so there he must be free to create such forms of beauty as, when with us, he could only glimpse. And the "Master of all good workmen," is surely saying to him, day after day, "Continue, mon enfant!"

R. A. W.

SUSPENSE

By JOSEPH CONRAD

A historian of hearts is not a historian of emotions, yet he penetrates further, restrained as he may be, since his aim is to reach the very fount of laughter and tears. The sight of human affairs deserves admiration and pity. They are worthy of respect, too. And he is not insensible who pays them the undemonstrative tribute of a sigh which is not a sob, and of a smile which is not a grin.—*Conrad's preface to "A Personal Record."*

Does it perhaps seem strange that notice of this fragment of Joseph Conrad's long projected Napoleonic novel should be introduced by these words from one of his earlier prefaces? Something of the creed a very great artist is in those sentences: "Suspense" is, presumably, the last we shall have of him. It seems unlikely that even the indefatigable exertions of publishers and friends should glean much more from that field where the sun has set forever.

In the winter of 1814-15 Napoleon, driven out of Europe by the allies, ruled as mock emperor the little island of Elba. "Suspense" was to have been a novel written around "The Man of Destiny," or, more accurately, around the idea, almost the eidolon, in the philosophic sense, of him; the conception of Napoleon portentous in exile, menacing the peace of Europe like a black storm cloud in the offing. In Conrad's own phrase, this "idea" was "vague enough to include every illusion that ever fooled mankind." Waterloo was yet to come; Napoleon's personality still held men fascinated. "There must be some charm," comments Dr. Martel, the enigmatic secret agent of "Suspense," "in that gray coat and that old three-cornered hat of his, for the man himself has betrayed every hatred and every hope that have helped him on his way."

As the protagonist of his last romance Conrad has created Cosmo

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Latham, a young English squire traveling across Europe with his carriage and body-servant in the leisurely manner of his class and era. He meets with adventure on the evening of his arrival in the old seaport of Genoa; by a sort of whimsical curiosity he becomes cognizant of and almost party to the secret communication which a lank man in a shabby sailor's jacket is holding with a becalmed vessel outward bound for Elba. This Attilio is a seafarer, a lover of liberty and a conspirator; his destiny is to be interwoven with that of the young Englishman in the fateful, inscrutable manner so characteristic of Conrad.

Residing in Genoa is another whose fortunes seem foredoomed to some relationship with those of Cosmo. With her parents, Adele, Countess de Monteverso, had, as a child, found refuge at Latham Hall after the French Revolution and Terror. Now she is a great lady of Genoa, the wife of a fabulously rich Piedmontese count of sinister repute. Cosmo renews the childhood friendship and falls deeply in love with the obviously unhappy countess. So far the novel has moved along a leisurely and devious path. Clews have been thrown out that may lead anywhere. A full set of characters have passed slowly across the stage with little intimation of their future significance. Conrad has, with unusual care and explicitness, been laying in his groundwork.

Then suddenly the tempo quickens. Young Latham, oppressed by the weight of his quite impossible infatuation, leaves his inn at night and wanders out to the stone watch tower at the end of the long jetty from which Attilio had sent his message to the Elban barque. Almost at once he becomes involved in a man hunt; the town police are in full cry after someone. To avoid stray shots he takes cover behind some scattered breakwater stones, where, to his amazement, he is stealthily joined by Attilio. Most of the tried devices of political melodrama find their way into "Suspense." There is even a mysterious packet of papers that Attilio leaves in Cosmo Latham's hat just before he springs up from their precarious shelter and dashes away into the night. A moment later Cosmo is surrounded by the *sbirri* and carried off as a nominal captive.

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Unlike Anteus, the giant of old, who gained strength each time his feet touched the earth, Conrad renews his vigor and his power of fascination so soon as he puts salt water beneath the characters of his creation. "Suspense" takes on new vividness the moment that a pulling boat with a frail and ancient boatman puts out into the harbor of Genoa bearing Cosmo Latham and two sleepy guards. The Englishman is rescued after a swift struggle on the quiet face of the waters. Attilio and two comrades, having laid low the guards with boat stretchers, bear him off in another skiff.

But more important than Cosmo's deliverance is the author's own recovery. Conrad's tale is now gathering strength almost with each sentence. There are passages that have much of the old glamour which delighted men in the days when "The Nigger of the Narcissus," "Lord Jim" and "Youth" were coming out and proving to those who had eyes to see that a new planet had swum into the sky. Are not sentences like these (Cosmo is musing on the strange trick chance has played him) as good as a signature—inimitable and unique,—

"He surrendered to the soft and invincible stillness of air and sea and stars enveloping the active desires and the secret fears of men who have the sombre earth for their stage. At every momentary pause in his long and fantastic adventure it returned with its splendid charm and glorious serenity, resembling the power of a great and unfathomable love whose tenderness like a sacred spell lays to rest all the vividities and all the violences of passionate desire."

Before Attilio and Cosmo had made port, Conrad himself was outward bound on his last, shadowy voyage. It would be a shabby tribute to his greatness to place "Suspense" among his major triumphs. No doubt the tale would have been a long one, but it seems unlikely that even completed it would ever have equaled "Nostromo," to mention only the premier of the full length novels. Still, as has been said, "Suspense" was gaining power with every page, and who would be rash enough to predict or fore-limit even the least of the achievements of so authentic a genius?

THE DIARY OF OTTO BRAUN

"War's scythe does not sweep blindly."

Not all the "golden lads" who, during four years of blundering holocaust, "came to dust" followed the allies' colors. To poignantly realize this, one has only to read "The Diary of Otto Braun," a superbly gifted and high-spirited German boy who fell on the Somme front before he had completed his twenty-first year. But surely it is symptomatic of a healing-process at work in the wounds of the world that such a volume can now find sympathetic, world-wide appreciation. Both the *London Nation* and *Athenaeum* and the *Paris Nouvelle Revue Francaise* have paid generous tribute to this self portrait of a charming scholar-prodigy, who at seventeen went to the shambles of the Russian front for the Fatherland, chafed sadly because a severe wound kept him behind the lines for a year and a quarter, and died in action six months before the Armistice without ever, so far as one may know, suffering a moment's doubt of the cause for which he fought.

His book is not a diary in the literal sense; it contains only excerpts from a journal and letters written between the ages of nine and twenty, together with a number of youthful poems which of course lose much in translation. But through these various *media* there emerge, for the reasonably attentive reader, a spirit so delicately sensitive, an intellect so sanely brilliant, that one closes the volume with a vague sensation of loss. Otto Braun, his brain an intricate treasure-house of the wisdom of the past, his soul on fire to perfect and glorify the idea of a peaceful state, was killed by a direct hit from a high-explosive shell. It is a catastrophe that seems as senseless and wasteful as the shelling of a cathedral.

When Otto Braun was twelve years old his mother, herself a woman of unusual intellectual attainments, became convinced that

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the boy's precocious brilliance unsuited him for ordinary schooling. To verify her judgment she submitted the matter to a Prof. Josef Petzoldt, apparently an authority on highly gifted children. This resulted in the learned gentleman's at once requesting his superiors to relieve him of his duties at the University of Spandau for three or four years so that he might devote himself solely to the education of Otto. With a solemn enthusiasm typically Teutonic the amazed savant reviews the boy's accomplishments in a long communication included in an appendix to the Diary. "In an educational experience of over twenty years," he says, "during which I have come in contact with not a few highly gifted pupils, both boys and girls, I have never yet met with a case which could in any way even be compared with this one." But the professor's request was refused with curt bureaucratic indifference, and Otto's education remained in the hands of his parents.

For the most part they allowed him to browse at will, his mind revealing from the first an austere classic bent quite in contrast with traditional German romanticism. He was so early steeped in the waters of Hellas that the Greek gods and wood spirits were very real to him. By certain passages in his journal one is reminded of the youthful Shelley.

But for him the German spirit meant the idealism of Goethe and Schiller. The rough manners and harsh discipline of the Prussian army were inevitably most distasteful to him. He was competent; he turned his fine mind into abnormal channels and learned thoroughly the soldier's business, but his early war letters are full of unhappy overtones. He knew none of the Junker's arrogance toward his inferiors; in one letter to his parents he complains of finding the attention of his soldier-servant disconcerting. "I don't like having my stirrup polished by a man who, in experience, knowledge and capacity, is my superior, and with whom I feel on an equal footing through his simple and beautiful love of our country."

Because of his parents' political opinions (both the elder Brauns were prominent in the Social-Democratic party) life in the officers' mess of his first regiment, a crack Jager organization, became intolerable.

THE DIARY OF OTTO BRAUN

erable and he transferred to the infantry. In 1915 he received the cross for his skill in carrying dispatches and the appendix contains a spirited account of Otto's handling of a recalcitrant midnight burial party. The dead lay between the lines in such gruesome condition that the men were tempted to grumble and shirk the work, but the eighteen-year-old boy kept them at it by declaring that "if your minds cannot master decay, then decay will master your minds," and by reciting in the dark night passages from the *Iliad*.

Almost never may verse be adequately translated, and Braun's youthful efforts, which in the original reveal considerable deftness and lyric sweetness, become formal and lifeless in the English rendering. As the boy wrote them, something of the Greek joy in life occasionally illuminates a passage. There is one admirable little poem, commemorating a blue and gold June afternoon when he and his soldier comrades rode, naked, on glistening horses into a lovely willow-shaded stream. From this it seems but fair to quote two verses in the German:

"Vergessend des Kriegs und des wirbelnden Donners der Schlachten,
An blauendem, grunendem, golden erschimmerndem Tag—
Rings die Kameraden riefen und liefen und lachten—
Ritten wir nackt in den Fluss, der zu Fussen uns lag.

Mude von Frohlichkeit, blitzend auf blitzendem Pjerde,
Rege die Glieder und blank der spielende Blick,
Ueber die gluhende, bluhende, grunende Erde
Ritten wir ruhigen Trabs zu den Hausern Zuruck."

Braun was killed on the 28th of April, 1918, while serving as regimental adjutant during the operations on the Somme. One wonders whether post-war generations can feel the significance of such a brief, frustrate life. Probably nothing that he left may pretend to permanent literary value. The boy seldom, if ever, seems to have thought himself a poet; he never sought publication for anything that he wrote. Again and again throughout the diary there is intimation of the long period of study and preparation which he still considered needful before he dared attempt any serious enterprise.

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One gathers that he believed his real future to lie in social and political endeavor, and perhaps no youth ever felt more certain that he was born to greatness. So sure was he of the guiding power of his fate, his Daemon in the Greek sense, that the possibility of failing to survive the war seems scarcely to have occurred to him, even when his closest friends were falling all about him.

Tragically enough war's scythe does not sweep blindly. A sinister selective process appears to expose to greater hazards the straightest stalks and loveliest flowers. In every nation an Alan Seeger, Rupert Brooke, Jean-Marc Bernard, or their like, are faithful to the same fatal rendezvous. Of all that young and gallant company who, hating war, fought bravely and died unquestioningly, none promised fairer nor faded earlier than Otto Braun.

GLORIOUS APOLLO

By E. BARRINGTON

"Gorgeous patches of color set off against ugly blackness."

On first thought Lord Byron would appear almost the ideal hero for one of E. Barrington's historical romances. But is there not in the very title, "Glorious Apollo," something a little flamboyant and theatrical, something that suggests the atmosphere of an elaborately costumed pageant, rather than the queer, tough, contradictory stuff of life itself?

No doubt there is a kaleidoscopic quality in Byron that makes his essence difficult of capture. Under life's "dome of many-colored glass" he reveals gorgeous patches of color set off against ugly blackness. In the nature of things E. Barrington could only hope to bring into high-light a few facets of his many-sided personality. She (for, in spite of masculine pronouns on the jacket, I am convinced the author of "Glorious Apollo" is a woman) sees Byron too exclusively in his relations to her own sex—beyond doubt his most sinister aspect; so the figure created in her pages is far from a lovable one.

Perhaps the best summary of the character of this extraordinary poet and peer is to be found in Harold Nicolson's recent study, "Byron: The Last Journey." His resume owes much to Macaulay's famous essay, but he puts the matter more tersely than does the great Victorian.

"It must be realized," says Nicolson, "that the life of Byron is not, as has often been imagined, a series of wasted opportunities; rather is it a catalogue of false positions. His brain was male, his character was feminine. He had genius, but it was misunderstood and misdirected; he had beauty, but it was branded by deformity; he had rank, but no position; fortune, but it came too late; fame, but it blazed for him too early. From his childhood the foreground

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of his life had been out of focus with the background; throughout his career this error of focus marred the sincerity, the completeness, and even the meaning of the whole."

E. Barrington never comes as near the heart of the man as that. For her he is "Don Juan" always; she fails to do justice to the adventuring spirit of "Childe Harold" or the intrepid heart of "The Corsair."

A book that centers on Byron's relations with his wife—which were damnable—cannot deal adequately with such matters as his patient and far-sighted conduct of the Grecian expedition—which was highly creditable. Of him it is supremely true that "Nothing in life became him like the leaving it." He died old and burnt-out at thirty-six—too soon for him had come the time when, in the words of his own song:

. . . . the sword outwears its sheath
And the soul wears out the breast,
And the heart must pause to breathe,
And love itself have rest.

I cannot avoid the conviction that this author has committed a grave error in proportion in placing the climax of Byron's life at the apex of an amatory triangle with his wife and Augusta Leigh. The truth is that Byron was always innately and nonchalantly promiscuous. That Augusta Leigh was his half-sister has only caused scandal to link their names more stubbornly together. Even if the chains were deserved, Byron was too serenely a pagan to have esteemed his offense at E. Barrington's high figure.

Only the most hard-hearted could fail in sympathy for poor Lady Byron. But it would take an artist greater than this one to present her as a wholly winning and captivating personality. "Wanting one sweet weakness—to forgive," too fastidious and intelligent to capitulate to Byron's tastes in domesticity, she remains something of a prig and a blue stocking. No doubt her husband could never have been satisfied with less than a combination of Cleopatra and Queen Victoria; for he could desire only an odalisk and respect only a nobly-born housewife.

GLORIOUS APOLLO

Lord Byron was of the type of sophists who, having made a sad mess of their own lives, pour scorn and contempt upon human nature as a whole; hence, the bitter satire in "Manfred" and "Cain." His melancholy was what Joseph Conrad has called "the pessimism of the passionate who feel themselves the outcast in a morally restrained universe." And always he must remain a pitiful rebel because he respected slavishly the bars which he broke. How far he was from high-hearted Shelley, who blundered like a gorgeous butterfly through the palisades of society, but never paid them the tribute of a moment's veneration or esteem!

In his exile Lord Byron trundled across Europe like an eastern prince, with five carriages, six manservants, nine horses, dogs, monkeys, peacocks, ibises, a titled mistress and her family. But his auburn brown hair was turning gray, his teeth were going bad and he could never refrain from cocking an anxious eye toward Mayfair, hoping against hope that his antics might win applause. When at last he gave up his circus and struck out gravely and generously for the freedom of Hellas he did gain the plaudits of the Great World that he revered. But it came too late. In the dirty peasant's house at Missolonghi the gaudy pilgrim lay a-dying, with a polyglot and dismayed crowd of retainers chattering and quarreling about him and the sullen, incessant rain beating monotonously upon the roof.

JENNIFER LORN

By ELINOR WYLIE

"A sedate extravaganza—thin and clear as green leaves in April."

Sometimes, as in Elinor Wylie's recent "sedate extravaganza," "Jennifer Lorn," real service may be done the prospective reader by informing him just what the book is not. "Jennifer Lorn" is not a novel in the commonly accepted sense of the term; the author makes little pretence of presenting incidents of real significance or characters amenable to change or development. There is nothing here for the morbid-minded; the tenuous, delicate story is as free from sensuality as its heroine, the fragile and fabulously lovely Jennifer, whose "Lorn blood running wild and chilly in her veins kept her thin and clear as green leaves in April." Finally, it is not the work of an experienced novelist, but of a young American poet whose verse, particularly her last collection, "Black Armor," has revealed a subtle sensitiveness to tangible and visible beauty.

And, to return to the reviewer's more accustomed affirmations, it is just this quality of imaginative exactitude, this rarely sensitive "mind's eye" of Elinor Wylie's, that lends unusual charm to her first venture into prose. Rather than a novel, "Jennifer Lorn" is a colorful pageant of the late eighteenth century, the spacious debonairly vicious days of the London of the Zater Mohocks and the India of Warren Hastings.

Gerald Poynyard possessed, in addition to all the decorative virtues, a fine ruthlessness and a very modern conception of the necessity for hard work in order to get ahead in the world. He was the "heir to a barony whose extreme antiquity was the only satisfactory thing about it." But these were the times when every penniless aristocrat could expect to return to England with a *lakh* or so of rupees after a few years in the great East India Company's serv-

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ice. Thus Gerald Poynyard came home, but only to find a bride; having once seen the beautiful Jennifer he made short work of the matrimonial arrangements with her father, the Scotch earl of Tam-Linn, bibliophile extraordinary and descendant, according to his own account, of Tamurlaine the Great.

Gerald bore off his bride to Calcutta in the *Phoenix* East India-man. This was the period when half a hundred full-bodied, kettle-bottomed Indiamen sometimes lay together off Gravesend awaiting a fair wind. If this were slow in coming, the young bloods bound east would often dash back to London by post chaise for another night's carousal. People had not then begun to talk much about the rights of subject nations; India, like a great deal of the rest of the world, existed for the enrichment and enjoyment of the English gentry.

What an exotic and incredible pair Elinor Wylie has created to wander through the sleepy magnificence of the East! The impeccable Gerald, as his wife described him, "was a superb horseman; his knowledge of history was amazing, and his fund of anecdotes inexhaustible." Jennifer herself was always frail and exquisite, invariably clothed in white, her flame-red hair left unpowdered by Gerald's strict instructions.

He had sensed the coming of a new mode; "in this as in other and more important matters the thin egg-shell of the future was transparent to his pale and rapacious eye."

The actual incidents in the story are extravagant and often absurd, mere excuses for the staging of gorgeous tableaux. One remembers Jennifer in the palace in Delhi singing old Scotch ballads, "lifting her mournful little voice to cry, 'I've heard them liltin' at our ewe milkin' The flowers of the forest are all wede away.'"

One can hardly forget Gerald, "doing all that lay in his power to mitigate the horrors of the journey; he always insisted that champagne was more refreshing than salvolatile, and had the good fortune to be able to present Jennifer with that strange and sumptuous curiosity, the skin of the rare black and white Bengal tiger, a superb specimen of which he shot early one morning in a jungle so pro-

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foundly sunk in green depths of vegetation as to render it far darker than a starry midnight in open country."

While traveling to Persia in the interests of the great Warren Hastings, Gerald's party is set upon by bandits. He defends himself with sardonic and picturesque valor, but in vain. "A screaming press of spears and darts was immediately loosed at his shining and uncovered head; he fell to earth pierced by twenty arrows." They even drove a stake through his heart, but that was by no means sufficient to permanently down such a paladin. He reappears just in time to frustrate an elopement between the supposedly widowed Jennifer and the ingenuous Prince Abbass.

Gerald explains in this inimitable fashion his miraculous escape: "You must know that after the wretches had apparently slain me and cast me into a deep pit with a number of stones cracking my ribs and breastbones, they took the precaution to drive a stake through what they erroneously supposed to be my heart, but which was in reality no more than the left lapel of my cloak; my side was barely grazed in the process."

"Such are the advantages of possessing an elegant figure," said the Persian with an envious glance at Gerald's refined anatomy. The Englishman bowed gravely.

By her truly amazing profusion of accurate historical detail the author makes such fantastic stuff vivid and delightful. It is interesting to speculate on her sources for so elaborate an eighteenth century atmosphere. Besides the usual histories and reference books one feels sure that she has read with care those fat blue volumes of William Hickey's "Memoirs." Certain little incidents, such as the groaning palanquin bearers, Gerald's refusal to smoke a hookah, and his correcting the navigation of the *Phoenix*, are closely paralleled in that most graphic and sprightly of personal records. It is possible, too, that the book owes something to Jenin Shaw's Journal of a "Lady of Quality." Certainly the combination which it exhibits of exuberant fancy and sound scholarship is unusual and charming.

It should be a source of keen satisfaction to ardent feminists to

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contemplate the present state of American letters. With this book of Elinor Wylie's added to the recent triumphs of Edith Wharton, Willa Cather and Edna Ferber, our virile wielders of the pen may soon be detected groping a little embarrassedly for laurels which have already vanished. "Jennifer Lorn" is a notably successful venture into what has heretofore been almost an exclusive masculine preserve, the field of satiric, pseudo-historical fantasy.

LAY THOUGHTS OF A DEAN

By WILLIAM RALPH INGE

"The center of gravity in religion shifted from authority to experience."

In this volume the Very Reverend William Ralph Inge, D. D., dean of St. Paul's, commander of the Victorian Order, and fellow of the British Academy, condescends to consider a few problems comprehensible to the laity—even to indulge in a little clerical playfulness. He separates these short journalistic papers under four heads, literary, religious, social and political.

In dealing with matters bookish or devotional, the dean writes out of a ripe scholarship and an abundant piety, but in considering questions of the prosaic, workaday world, though his ideas are often thoroughly sound, he somewhat lacks sympathy with what Matthew Arnold used to call "the average sensual man." Indeed it would be strange if it were otherwise. Ascending in late middle life from an obscurity of donnish seclusion to a prominence beneath the dome of Paul's, where he is almost a national institution, he has perhaps had too little of the softening experience of intimate personal contacts.

Possibly a few more facts about this slightly austere but eminently admirable cleric may not seem amiss, since the publication of his "Lay Thoughts" is due as much to his personal prominence as to his literary distinction.

Dean Inge has so closely identified himself with a certain school of Alexandrian philosophy, and with the abstruse Plotinus in particular, that he is supposed once to have hesitated whether he might be more correctly called a Christian or Neoplatonist. He is one of the greatest champions of theological liberalism in any church today. His erudite contempt for the narrow tenets of traditional

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theology makes pleasant reading for anyone grown a little weary of blue-law paladins and two-gun fundamentalists. He says:

"The present state of affairs is intolerable. A clergyman is expected to believe, or at least to profess, a variety of opinions, relating to strictly scientific facts, which all educated men know to be absurd, and it is supposed by many that we cannot be Christians unless we believe them. This is to put a stumbling block in the way of faith. Faith is not, as a schoolboy is reported to have said, 'believing what you know to be untrue.' It is rather the resolution to stand or fall by the noblest hypothesis."

Like a London contemporary of his, Father Ronni Knox, he refuses to accept as the battleground for the Christian religion either "the credibility of Judges or the edibility of Jonah."

Now, when a deeply religious man refuses such an obvious prop to faith as the doctrine of verbal inspiration, when he can speak sadly of "generations of English people having been made to believe that their hopes in Christ stand or fall with the historical accuracy of the patriotic legends of a tribe of Bedouins," he must perforce fall back on that inner and much misunderstood spiritual light called mysticism.

Mysticism is misunderstood because it is perhaps the most difficult state of human consciousness to comprehend. Dean Inge tries to explain it a little. He says: "The center of gravity in religion has shifted from authority and tradition to experience. The evidences of religion are no longer external and miraculous; they are those which faith itself supplies." Hence mysticism must be for each man a unique and to some extent incommunicable knowledge.

Perhaps the ordinary reader will follow the dean more easily when he approaches such familiar and tangible problems as eugenics and divorce. On the first of these he is quite advanced, though perhaps a trifle gullible. A lively faith in race and nationalism goes hand in hand with his eugenic credence, and it is a little disquieting to find so wise a man as Dean Inge quoting with respect so dubious a prophet as Lothrop Stoddard.

Upon the subject of divorce the dean speaks no doubt with more

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feeling of authority and certainly with more persuasive argument. That he should adopt a reasonably rigorous attitude might be expected; certainly organized religion could not be supposed to sponsor the legalized divorce mill. But see how deftly and cannily he takes his position; it will need more than the feeble firecrackers of naughty novelists to blast him out of this stronghold:

"The new theory of marriage seems to be something of this kind, the marriage vow is a declaration of ardent sexual emotion, and if at any time this feeling comes to be excited by another person, the continuance of married life becomes an outrage upon the higher feelings, and the gratification of what used to be called lust becomes a blissful self-expression of the personality. The truth, of course, is that the marriage vow is not a declaration at all, but a promise of lifelong love and fidelity. It is the most sacred and solemn obligation into which a man and woman ever entered, an obligation enforced by every consideration of honor, decency, justice, and religion. To say that our affections are not under the control of our wills is to bestialize human nature and to strike at the root of the validity of all contracts.

"We seldom realize how completely the freedom of social intercourse between men and women depends upon the general acceptance of the sanctity of marriage. Things are very different in countries where virtue is supposed to depend on the absence of opportunity, and the woman is the chief sufferer. The pleasantest side of our civilization—the ease with which innocent friendships are made between men and women—stands or falls with that Christian sexuality which is now being openly flouted."

If one is seeking to find fault there is opportunity a-plenty in these dogmatic and opinionated little essays. The dean has a few nasty and really quite unjustifiable things to say of America. Granted that this land is vulnerable enough, his shafts are ill-aimed; they are the criticisms of a man who seems to know the United States chiefly from the leading articles of partisan English newspapers.

His sympathy for the troubles of the British working man today

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is, to put it mildly, very temperate. I believe that his advice to him would follow the slightly archaic formula of the dean's prayer book. He would suggest the catechism to his attention with its injunction to: "submit myself to all my governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters: to order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters . . . not to covet or desire other men's goods; but to learn and labor truly to get mine own living, and to do my duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call me."

That sort of medicament for industrial unrest is perhaps a little out of date, but the dean's ideas do not seem to have advanced much beyond it.

However, with it all, his book is a volume distinctly worth reading and owning. If he seems a trifle unwieldy at times, remember that he carries enormously heavy guns of erudition and scholarship. If he here blazes away at small birds, let us not forget that he has scored on distant and elusive targets in his time. Try his "Studies of English Mystics," or "The Philosophy of Plotinus," if you are seeking intellectual gymnastics.

When, in these "Lay Thoughts," he writes of betting, the rights of animals, or capital punishment, you may be sure he is writing from strong and long established convictions. Few leaders of thought today give such an impression of transcendent and indomitable honesty. He is one of those who possess "that intellectual honesty which dreads what Plato calls 'the lie in the soul' even more than the lie on the lips."

THE PILGRIM OF ETERNITY BYRON—A CONFLICT

By JOHN DRINKWATER

"The wandering outlaw of his own dark mind."

It is a considerable tribute to the fascinating personality of Lord Byron that John Drinkwater should commence his new biography of the indomitably vital poet and "Pilgrim of Eternity" in the attitude of an impartial judge and close it almost in the manner of an impassioned advocate. This change of position is best defended in Mr. Drinkwater's own words: "The more we know of Byron," he says in his epilogue, "the more confident are we that we could augment most of the indictments brought by his easy detractors, since at every step to know him better is the more to discover his frailties, and his poor little compromises in the conflict that was his life. And yet, choosing the words unscrupulously, the more we know him the more we love him, and the more we respect the splendidly vital force that directed and at last consumed him."

But to maintain this love, this warm respect, it seems necessary for Mr. Drinkwater sometimes to disregard, though never to ignore, some very ponderable evidence. He is willing to disbelieve important testimony of Shelley, Trelawney and Lady Blessington on grounds amounting to little more than his own emotional intuitions. There is still witchery in the mere name of this poet. Lady Caroline Lamb, most unfortunate of all the women who knew the unhappiness of loving Byron, saw him once and described him for all time as "Mad, bad, and dangerous to know." To the end there was in him a streak of irresponsible savage and almost juvenile gusto—and this characteristic will often confuse and sometimes confute a little, even a commentator as sober and scholarly as Mr. Drinkwater.

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All this, however, does not affect in the least the paramount fact that here is a valuable book, sincere, well documented, and thorough. Though exhaustive, it is never exhausting. As Mr. Drinkwater says, almost all of the people who have written about Byron have written extremely well, and in this instance the biographer is qualified with peculiar excellence because he himself is a veteran practitioner of the art of poetry. The best of this volume is its interpretation of Byron as a poet. At moments it makes one wish that none save those who had at least passed journeymen in the craft should be licensed to write of the great masters of the guild.

As an indication of the honesty of Mr. Drinkwater's approach to the man whom in the end he hails "as of a nature essentially heroic," one notes that his first chapter, approximately one-seventh of the book, is devoted to the sinister "Byronic controversy," the question of his relations with his half-sister, Augusta Leigh. After a meticulous examination of even the smallest scrap of evidence, his verdict on the specific charge of incest is "not proven." One gladly concurs in that, but one must subscribe also to Mr. Drinkwater's suspicion that somewhere in the origin of this scandal lies some other unknown and unsavory incident. Byron left England "the wandering outlaw of his own dark mind." Brutishness is stubborn stuff when one is trying to construct a hero, and of this quality Mr. Drinkwater's protagonist possessed more than a normal share.

It is here that the biographer challenges some of the long-accepted authorities, and perhaps it may be well to summarize briefly the points at issue. Shelley, who was no prude, and whose own integrity and close friendship for Byron are unchallengeable, thought Byron had sunk to abysmal depths of debauchery in Venice, and regarded his treatment of Clare Clairmont and her child as inhuman and churlish. Lady Blessington, for her part, only charges him with being *gauche* and vulgar, a sort of accusation which Mr. Drinkwater is undoubtedly right in thinking Byron would have resented more than all the abuse and defamation to which he was at that time subject. The upshot of all of Trelawney's aspersions is that he often found Byron a cad and a hypocrite, but in this connection

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it should be remembered that Trelawney, too often, saw Byron by the side of Shelley—and who indeed could bear juxtaposition with that lovely, ethereal spirit, “as perfect a gentleman,” in Byron’s mundane phrase, “as ever crossed a drawing room!”

All of these charges Mr. Drinkwater discredits somewhat dogmatically. He seems quite willing to accept these witnesses when their testimony shows Byron in a better light. In the early chapters he was singularly scrupulous in estimating even the most venomous of traducers, but toward the end he appears over-eager to create a sunset glow for his departing “pilgrim.”

The greatest defense for Byron is, of course, his own poetry. “Don Juan” is, and bids fair to remain, the only great modern epic. Nowhere else is the lonely, agnostic, mocking spirit of the nineteenth century so perfectly epitomized. To this day it makes livelier reading than three-fourths of the novels that are its contemporaries. And at the last one must pause, wondering at the vast and vital energy of the man. In a working life of sixteen years he wrote eighty thousand lines of verse. Compare him to Browning, often hailed as among the most prolific of bards, who in sixty years of writing produced scarcely one hundred thousand.

Shelley’s final tribute to the poetry of his friend represents supremely that initiate and esoteric knowledge in which Mr. Drinkwater, too, shares: “Byron,” he says, “touched a chord to which a million hearts responded, and the coarse music which he produced to please them, disciplined him to the perfection to which he now approaches.”

Shelley, Keats, Byron—they all died young, those giants of the nineteenth century. Of Byron, the often-quoted Johnsonian phrase, “a lamp that spent its oil in blazing,” is supremely applicable. What matter now the smoke and the soot flecks after one hundred years of fierce and ardent flaming?

CHARLES DICKENS AND OTHER VICTORIANS

By SIR ARTHUR QUILLER-COUCH

*"The truly great artists whom the English people have taken
to their hearts."*

No one has been of finer service to the youth of the English-speaking world; no one has proved a surer guide for all who would, in the Johnsonian phrase, "graze the common of literature" than Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch. These lectures on "Charles Dickens and Other Victorians," delivered originally from his professorial desk at Cambridge, now bound in a book, serve to carry his urbane and mellow voice across the Atlantic. His masterly appreciation of Dickens, ample without exuberance, alone would justify the volume of which it fills one-third; but there are in addition splendid studies of Thackeray, Disraeli, Mrs. Gaskell, Anthony Trollope, and the Victorian Age, which serve to round it out handsomely.

Quiller-Couch excels at the gentle art of quotation: with him it is so apt and so discriminating that it becomes almost a creative act. Although, like Montaigne, he might say sometimes that he has "made a nosegay of culled flowers and brought nothing of my own but the thread that ties them together," still the selection is superbly artful and from a rich meadow, and the thread invariably leads to a just and penetrating judgment. In two pages, selected almost at random, one comes upon De Quincey, Samuel Johnson, Arnold, Collins, Tolstoi, Charles Reade and Henry James, all aiding and embellishing in some way the thesis that Charles Dickens deserves his place among the truly great artists whom the English people have taken to their hearts.

The prime qualification of Dickens for this company was absolute appropriateness to the age for which he wrote. Perhaps the ideals

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and imagination of no other author, unless it be Dostoievsky, were ever identified so perfectly with those of the mass of his compatriots. Even his faults, his sentimentality, his preachiness and his frequent propensity to create caricatures rather than characters became ponderable factors in his popularity. It is difficult to realize today the magnificence of that popularity. Quiller-Couch speaks of his countryman's "intimate, passionate pride in him" as a "fact singular in English literary history." Nor does he begrudge him a whit of it; it was all deserved, he feels, although the world which Dickens created was a "world empty of religion, thought, and science." What ties this phantasmagoric world to our own is Charity, "the inestimable gift of Charity that Dickens flings over all things."

In Quiller-Couch's own phrase, "The papers on Dickens and Thackeray attempt judgment on them as full novelists." In the case of the latter he shows briefly but convincingly how much his work was affected by the personal sorrow of his wife's insanity. Thackeray, most domestic of men, was in a sense pathetically homeless; many of his finest novels were scribbled on club paper. Another influence which really served to narrow and curtail his talent was the exotic, almost alien, atmosphere of the Anglo-Indian governing class which was Thackeray's heritage. He sadly wanted, thinks Quiller-Couch, close touch with the English countryside and "never quite understood the roots of English life." To augment the bill of his defects, he was a snob.

Nevertheless he owns himself fascinated by the delicate, subtle beauty of Thackeray's style. He must "conclude by bowing the head, acknowledging a real master; a great melancholy man with his genius running in streaks, often in thin streaks about him, but always when uttered, uttered in liquid, lovely prose."

The three papers, "The Victorian Age," "Disraeli" and "Mrs. Gaskell" are unified by his conception of the novelist as a potent force in alleviating the evils which the first onset of the industrial age produced in England. At a time when "the London parishes by custom claimed a right to dispose at will of all children of a person receiving relief, and disposed of them to the manufacturers; and

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one Lancashire mill owner agreed with a London parish to take one idiot with every twenty sound children supplied," the talents of such dissimilar artists as Mrs. Gaskell and the foppish Israelite prime minister were found ready and competent to cry shame and to denounce the outrages.

To Trollope, Quiller-Couch feels full justice has not been rendered. His power has been somewhat obscured by his immense bulk.

In a volume like "Charles Dickens and Other Victorians," almost all of which has been first delivered orally, there is inevitably some repetition and redundancy. Even as a lecturer Quiller-Couch has a reputation for rambling; his books are usually far from "tight" in the technical sense of the term. But let those who care to make the most of such flaws. One might challenge any fair-minded reader to peruse this collection and arise from it without a new and delightfully enlarged conception of the spirit of the great Victorian Age, and a lively intention to reread five of its most significant novelists.

CASTLE CONQUER

By PADRAIC COLUM

"A tale told in bright-colored panels . . . a mural design."

Padraic Colum has fashioned "Castle Conquer," his recent Irish folk romance, with a loving and tender hand. Indeed, in some of his soft-toned pastels of his native countryside there is much of the homely magic of Burns; Louis Hemon wrote so of the tiny snow-bound homesteads of the French-Canadians; Willa Cather has so portrayed the rich Nebraska corn lands.

Yet the book is no mere picturesque idyll of the middle counties. The sinister, uneasy specter of political violence stalks through its pages; for no one knows better than Colum, who spent his childhood among them, to what lengths the Irish country people in the 1880's were driven by famine, taxation, and the encroachments of ruthless and alien landlords. "Castle Conquer" is a distinguished and unusual first novel which adds considerably to the debt that contemporary letters owe to the artists of Southern Ireland.

His story Colum tells in a succession of vivid pictures. It is a method which does not lend itself to a smooth or swiftly moving narrative; rather it is like a tale told in bright-colored panels—a mural design. One remembers Francis Gillick, "the spoilt priest," arriving as a "working guest" at Honor Paralon's cottage among the golden blossomed whin bushes. He has returned, still a layman and hence half disgraced, from a Catholic seminary in Spain. One sees him, a strange-faced, intense youth, who holds his shaggy horse's head up with a rein of rough rope. One recalls his meeting with Brigid Moynagh, Honor's daughter, whose hair "was redder than chestnut; it was red-gold in places, and in places had gold in it that was like the pale gold of the whin blossom; it was a head that should be carried well, a head with an oriflamme of hair."

CASTLE CONQUER

The spirit of Castle Conquer, ivy-covered, overrun with peacocks, broods over the tale as Colum feels it has brooded over all Ireland since the Norman Conquest. The great English landowners, the De Courceys and the Seagraves, have pressed the people from off the best lands and driven them into squalid villages like that of Monamore which "was made up of about twenty cabins. They were not arranged in rows; each was built as if for a whim, its gable-end right before the door of another cabin, and its back with only a passage between it and the front of the third. All the cabins were wretched-looking; the smallness of the terrain huddled one on the other. The fathers of the people who lived here had been turned out of lands that were now inclosed by De Courcey's demesne walls. They had made fields where there were only heaps and layers of stones and patches of bog. No holding was big enough to permit of a plow being used on it."

There is a dramatic moment later in the story when Francis Gillick, seated on the half ruined O'Failey's Tower which his ancestors had erected during their short dominion over Castle Conquer, joins the ever-smoldering movement of revolt against the English landholders. Yet, for the most part, his is an ineffectual allegiance; though he does make a futile single-handed attempt to prevent the eviction of old Martin Jordan from his tiny holding. From then on he is a marked man, "Whiteboy." In the meantime he has won the love of Brighid, and life has become very sweet to him.

During the night when she, fearing for his safety, has kept him alone with her at the cottage, Jonathan Woulfe, the De Courcey steward, is mysteriously shot. The English authorities, of course, accuse Gillick of the murder and here, oddly enough, is almost the finest moment of the story.

To clear him Brighid must admit in an alien court and in a strange city that Francis had been her lover. The author has handled this *cliche* with such delicacy and simplicity that it becomes a thing of memorable beauty. It is Colum at his best; he makes a great business of describing the scene before the trial, until one feels oppressed, along with the "dusty-footed people huddled to-

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gether in the back of the court," with all this ponderous and awesome pageantry of Anglo-Saxon justice.

From this point the dramatic unity of the story seems to go to pieces rather badly. Francis is acquitted of the murder charge, but convicted and sentenced to prison on a charge of conspiracy. We get a fleeting glimpse of him meeting Brighid on his release and then Colum drops the curtain only to raise it again after forty years have passed, on what seems a most disappointing final chapter. Francis Gillick is once more returning from prison; he has served six months for carrying a message concealed in the harness of his cart. After forty years of plotting there is almost a sublime futility in this sort of a denouement. Brighid has long since died—Francis is surrounded by children whom Colum has no time to let us really know.

The scene has become modern—almost contemporary. One begins to sense the atmosphere of cold-blooded violence in which Rory O'Connor and a crowd of pale-faced cigarette-smoking boys, bowed under heavy cartridge belts, held the Four Courts of Dublin against the British machine guns and field pieces. The English attitude, too, has changed immensely. Some, at least, of them have become patient and conciliatory, anxious only for elementary lifeguards to their security and honor.

News of the conference at London which has resulted in the compromise of the Irish Free State reaches the people. To most of them this appears only a half-fulfilment of their lifelong dreams and aspirations and the book closes on a note of musing, puzzled melancholy. Doubtless many in Ireland feel just so today. But it seems a discordantly realistic ending to what has been for the most part a brave and colorful romance.

However, it is in its delightful company of minor characters, in its charming incidental scenes, that this novel makes its real claim to distinction. Colum can in one racy, pungent paragraph create a character that sticks like a burr in the reader's mind. Has he not in these few phrases set apart his half-wit, Paddy Sharkey, from all the idiots whom one has ever read of or encountered?

CASTLE CONQUER

"He was a fool by all appearance. But there was in Paddy's face the patience and shrewdness of peasant fathers, and while his big tongue rasped on, his eyes held the look of a man standing patiently in a field, or following his herd or flock down some wind-beaten road."

A certain Gaelic flavor in the prose, though present in the text as well as in the dialogue, is never overdone; the style is much like that of James Stephens in his "Crock of Gold" or "Mary, Mary." But his speeches never attain the fine resonance of Synge or even Lady Gregory. Colum's ideas seem to have changed little during his long sojourn in America; there is the same love of the soil and the men who are close to it, the same fine sympathy with the unconquerable spirit of the peasantry, and the same feeling for the "beauty of the creature who has never submitted to the yoke." All these pervaded the "Wild Earth" poems and the Irish theater plays.

Padraic Colum, in venturing so successfully into fiction with this novel of the people whom he loves, has displayed an admirable versatility. Nevertheless, he still seems primarily a poet. One feels that in the "Wild Earth" and "Dramatic Legend" verses one is nearest the heart of the man, and even in his plays it is the nationalist bard who is speaking through the puppets. Doubtless, in "Castle Conquer," too, it will be the moments of pure poetic feeling that one will longest remember.

TWO OR THREE GRACES

By ALDOUS HUXLEY

"Dreadful, intolerable people . . . bores."

From certain indications in his last volume it would appear that Aldous Huxley has grown a little weary of treading the antic hay; even of demonstrating the irrefutable barrenness of barren leaves. Admittedly, Huxley is a young man who was born tired, and nothing in this naughty world has ever stirred him unduly. He possesses nearly every requisite of genius save one—the power of conviction. Apparently he can believe in nothing, not even in the reality of the characters of his own creation. "Two or Three Graces" is a story that is really a novel in length, and a good deal more than an ordinary novel in subtlety, sensitiveness and psychological acrimony. Bound with it are three slighter bits, clever enough, but negligible because almost lacking the insight into unfamiliar emotional needs which makes "Two or Three Graces" memorable.

In the title story Huxley takes up his theme like a musician (indeed, as the teller of the tale, he purports to be a musical critic) and he begins softly to improvise on the motif, "bores." Herbert Comfrey was a bore; he stuck to people; "like a dog, he followed people about; he lay, metaphorically speaking, at their feet in front of the fire." Kingham was a bore, though a clever one; he had a weakness for hot emotional baths; he worked himself up into hysterics over trifles; he pampered his own irascibility.

Even Rodney Clegg, the artist, would weary most people; Rodney, the lecherous little pretty-man of thirty-five who contrived to look like a boy and specialized in painting nudes on bicycles. Says the author:

"The exasperated critics of the older school protested that a child of ten could have painted them. But the child of ten who could have

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painted such pictures must have been an exceedingly perverse child. In comparison, Freud's Little Hans would have been an angel of purity, for Rodney's nudes, however unrealistic, were luscious and voluptuous; were even positively indecent . . . All people who felt they ought to be in the movement, that it was a disgrace not to like modern art, discovered in Rodney Clegg, to their enormous delight, a modern artist whom they could really and honestly admire."

Most excruciating of all was John Peddley, the active superbore, the relentless, indefatigable piercer. "He talked incessantly and his knowledge of uninteresting subjects was enormous."

Dreadful, intolerable people, you may say. How can one make an amusing story about them? Aldous Huxley does. Of course no mention has yet been made of Grace, the sister of Herbert, the wife of John Peddley, and the mistress of Rodney Clegg and of Kingham. Grace was a gentle, lovable, chameleon-like girl who took color from one person after another and always required a dominating influence. Her weakness was that she could not live alone. Her tragedy was that she tried to live with John Peddley, Rodney Clegg and Kingham. With John Peddley she was considerably less than alive, while with Rodney she subsisted in an atmosphere of false, neo-rococo gaiety. His was a set that tried futilely to fit their twentieth century nonchalance into old, worn, eighteenth century patterns of mannered depravity. Finally, with Kingham she existed in torment; the man was an emotional sadist, with the usual masochistic complications. He made her truly pitiable:

"The next time she came Grace brought Catherine a present; not a powder puff this time, not gloves or ribbons, but a copy of Dostoevsky's 'Letters from the Underworld.'

" 'You must read it,' she insisted, 'you absolutely must. It's so damnably true.' "

Now when a girl is reduced to saying things like that, unquestionably she ought to change sweethearts. But of course Grace could not change anything; things just happened to her. Kingham throws her over at last, and Huxley suggests that her next phase must be a

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return to mere existence with John Peddley, and his talk of the Swiss banking system and the laws relating to insurance companies. That, on the face of it, might appear a more dreadful prospect than the one Oliver Goldsmith once held out for erring ladies:

When lovely woman stoops to folly,
And finds too late that men betray,
What charm can sooth her melancholy?
What art can wash her tears away?
The only art her guilt to cover,
To hide her shame from ev'ry eye,
To give repentance to her lover,
And wring his bosom is—to die.

But Aldous Huxley implies quite plausibly that for Grace there may be another Rodney, even another Kingham. Probably Mr. Huxley's brilliant and in some ways rather similar London contemporary, T. S. Eliot, had rather the psychological right of it when (in "The Wasteland") he paraphrased Goldsmith:

When lovely woman stoops to folly and
Paces about her room again, alone,
She smooths her hair with automatic hand
And puts a record on the gramophone.

There is unquestionably among the advanced English literary youth a tendency to return to classicism. The vogue of authors like David Garnett, T. S. Eliot and Rebecca West, is symptomatic. Huxley himself shows signs of participating in this movement even while he mocks at it. Strange, he says, that in some circles, the expressions, in inverted commas, "modernistic" and "eighteenth century," should be interchangeable. Perhaps it is only in the realm of pure science that men today may ease their nostalgia for precision and formality. The satires of Swift and the essays of Dryden are not likely to provide more than a bogus and transitory satisfaction. What appears in Aldous Huxley to be a new wistfulness for positivism and order may be only a slight atavism. His own great uncle had some small repute as a scientist back in the dark and ancient days of Queen Victoria.

FATHERS OF THE REVOLUTION

By PHILIP GUEDALLA

"It is a wise country that knows its own father."

This whimsical and exceedingly clever Englishman has a paradoxical notion of paternity. He considers that die-hard statesmen, like King George III and Lord North, and red-coated generals, like Burgoyne and Cornwallis, have sired the American Revolution just as authentically as the more traditional parents, Washington, Franklin, Samuel Adams, *et al.* The ineptitude and stubbornness of the first set accomplished quite as much as the intelligence and zeal of the second in "making two countries grow where one grew before." Mr. Guédalla here considers a dozen of these revolutionary progenitors, some acknowledged and some hitherto unrecognized in the role.

His manner, the peculiarly twentieth century manner, which Lytton Strachey is reputed to have initiated, compels him always to view the careers of his subjects from a slightly oblique angle. Familiar heroes thus take on new features. No doubt there is a freshness, lacking in the usual schoolbook portraits, about Washington regarded as a thoroughly typical English country squire. "It is a wise country that knows its own father," says Mr. Guedalla, and he holds that George III's chief rebel was as thoroughly Georgian as one of those formal red brick houses which still maintain the name. In this book Edmund Burke becomes a "style," Samuel Adams a "voice," and the plump, pop-eyed English king a plucky fool who possessed more of the solid virtues than partisan American historians have been wont to accord him. But when, in order to create an impression of novelty, he has to regard Alexander Hamilton simply as an "inspired clerk," one is tempted to protest a little. That is straining too hard for originality.

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Yet originality is a quality to which Mr. Guedalla often attains without undue effort. The lively flow of his paragraphs, the light play of epigram and paradox, which make his chapters such easy and effervescent reading, adorn but do not conceal an unusual attitude toward history. He likes sometimes to "picture strange encounters of historians with their history." "It is delightful," he conceives, "to contemplate a mediaevalist projected into the Middle Ages or an amateur of revolutions adrift in a bread-riot." Such contacts certainly would make for modesty and realism. Even in his earlier books, "Supers and Supermen," and "The Second Empire," Philip Guedalla has seemed to strive against the cocksureness to which his cleverness must tempt him.

Of the present volume the chief merit is its effortless focusing of the American Revolution into the decorous picture of the eighteenth century. That is a feat it would be unfair to demand of any American. For us, inured to fireworks and patriotic speeches, the fifes at Lexington and frozen feet at Valley Forge are too importunate. But Mr. Guedalla with steady and fastidious fingers places all this in its proper corner in the eighteenth century pattern. Indeed it is hard to escape an age which has "in a higher degree than almost any other, stamped its products with the mark of their origin. Its prose, its painting, its chair-backs, its poets, its spoons, and its divines, were almost uniformly true to period."

But it is not merely to place these voluntary and involuntary sires of rebellion that Mr. Guedalla is concerned; he is also determined, in a modest fashion, to portray them. He deplures "the stiff convention of official portraiture," and he denies that these are "exercises in that tittering denigration in which our age so frequently asserts its own superiority."

Seldom enough does a reviewer meet a book designed so skillfully to please divergent tastes. Students of elementary history, though they may not comprehend all Mr. Guedalla's subtleties, should yet delight in his color and vivacity. Connoisseurs of the eighteenth century will find in him a congruous enthusiasm. Some readers will warm to his humor; others will take pleasure in his style, for he,

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like Mr. Burke, is essentially "a style." Nothing will illustrate this better than the opening paragraph of his essay on unlucky Louis XVI of France, who, since he allowed Dr. Franklin to manoeuvre him into an alliance with "*les insurgents*," attains to a dubious paternity for these United States:

"It still hangs faintly in the air, the last, unfinished melody of the French monarchy. Thin and remote, it seems to drift among the trees at Trianon. Yet sometimes, before it wavers and dies away, one may catch it, like a band of violins busy with a brisk rigaudon of Philidor or some solemn concert piece of Pergolesi. Other ages return upon us with a fuller note. Rome was a gust of trumpets across Europe; and the church may live again in the slow thunder of an organ in a distant aisle. Islam returns in a wailing minor and a strange, regular throb of little drums. The lost empires of the East are found again in a sound of temple bells or a wild clamor of gongs. But of that time the note which still hangs upon the air is a faint throb of busy violins."

They are not profound; perhaps the sketches in this well-lighted gallery may lack depth and, occasionally, proportion. Yet, even exaggeration, if contrived with sufficient art, can approximate the exquisite. There is a quality in Philip Guedalla's writing that much resembles the inimitable drawing of Max Beerbohm. This grave playfulness of a thoroughly cultivated mind makes a neat repast, "light and choice, of Attic taste." Reading "Fathers of the Revolution" is like listening to the brilliant after-dinner conversation of an amiable and erudite historian.

No, it would be hard to challenge either the taste or talents of this investigator of our national blood-line. One must only regret a little that his papers, perhaps to facilitate their original appearance in a magazine, often are condensed too rigorously. His theme, in the case of Samuel Adams, Franklin, or, particularly, the elder Pitt, seems somehow incompletely developed. There is something peculiarly stimulating about Mr. Guedalla's few pages on Pitt, the hawk-nosed old parliamentary war-horse. But one feels that there are great things held back in reserve; is it possible that he contem-

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plates some day a life of "Don William Quixote," England's great advocate of a "spirited foreign policy"?

Though lacking its unity of design, "Fathers of the Revolution" is a wiser and more mellow book than "The Second Empire." It is almost disconcerting to find that sound history can be so entertaining. He concludes the volume with a mildly ironical "Footnote on Greatness."

"Great men. There used to be so many of them One met them in bronze, in marble, in public speeches, in large octavo volumes, in rather trying epic poems. Some helped to complicate the traffic at congested crossings. Others, more benign, were fitted with drinking fountains in public parks. But all, whether they leaned on pillars, read from scrolls, controlled incredibly restive chargers with a twitch of bronze reins, or merely served to round off a sentence in someone else's anniversary address, seemed equally to obstruct reflection. A bare mention of them was the invariable signal for a prompt and total cessation of thought."

However, Mr. Guedalla is no profane iconoclast. Upon mere suspicion of feet of clay he is not over-eager to dynamite the entire idol. Montaigne proposed once, in an essay on "The Inconvenience of Greatness," that "since we cannot attain to it, let us avenge ourselves by abusing it." From this very popular tendency Mr. Guedalla is refreshingly free.

HENRY THOREAU, BACHELOR OF NATURE

By LEON BAZALGETTE

"An umbrella, a straw hat, a paper bag . . . standard equipment."

Since for a Frenchman all things American have inherently a strange exotic quality, it is easy to understand how a transcendent and full-flavored Yankee such as Henry Thoreau must appear a subject of peculiar and stimulating charm. M. Bazalgette, the author of a standard work on Walt Whitman, here tries his hand on his crabbed, though unquestionably inspired, New England contemporary, whose place in English literature, while not exalted, is impregnable and unique.

Thoreau stands alone because it is almost impossible to conceive a man so good a naturalist, yet so little a scientist, so harsh and unbending toward his fellow men, yet at bottom such a great-hearted humanitarian; it would be difficult indeed to point to another life so lonely and empty, yet so deeply permeated with delicate and tranquil happiness.

Paradoxes like these are admirably suited to a Gallic pen. M. Bazalgette brings Thoreau before us vivid and complete, his big nose and spindling body, "like a wise and cunning gnome," the fine deep-seeing eyes, and that essential toughness of fiber in body and soul that helped him to outdistance common men and doomed him nearly always to walk alone.

Viewed casually, the mere events of Henry Thoreau's life are commonplace enough. His famous Walden experiment—what did it amount to after all? Two years in a cabin within easy walking distance of his own village and family fireside. He taught school and helped his father to make lead pencils; he rowed up and down nearby rivers in a homemade skiff, and once or twice he ventured up into Maine. One of his stirring escapades was a tramp down

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Cape Cod, lifted along by an autumnal gale under the shelter of an old green umbrella. An umbrella, a straw hat and a paper bag were standard equipment on Henry's most formidable expeditions. A pedestrian career by any reckoning. But he was a mighty walker, and the things he saw, trifling and ordinary to most men, perhaps, were fused by the ardor of his love of all life into material for literature that has stood the test of time.

This warm core of love in his nature was hidden beneath a shell as hard as a New England hickory nut. His fine and enduring friendship with Emerson was beautiful and has become a legend, but even that was shadowed toward the end. He held aloof from most of the great movements of his time; John Brown and the abolitionists stirred him to one solitary outburst of shrill enthusiasm, but the war, when it came, left him cold. It was too much a mob affair for him, no doubt. Yet it is hard to understand why the vast contemporary drama of the winning of the West should have meant so little to his sturdy and pioneer soul.

There is a sense, perhaps, in which Henry Thoreau loved Nature too intensely to become either a scientist or a great traveler. Her common wonders were a source of such amazing and eternal delight to him that he never found time for her more profound and distant mysteries. He was a strong, indomitable little man, all his life burning with the "hard, gem-like flame" of Walter Pater's creed. He faced death with the serenity of a stricken elm in the sunshine, and he still has much to teach a standardized and feverish world.

Books like M. Bazalgette's should help to make the lesson easy. His charming, consciously naive and slightly mannered style seems to have been carried over almost without loss in the translation of Mr. Van Wyck Brooks. The French have always had a fine sympathy for odd fish and intellectual rebels. Mere nonconformity seldom inhibits their admiration or affections. The shy Sage of Walden, so much lonely in his lifetime, never made a truer or more understanding friend than this stranger from a land he never saw.

THE PILGRIMAGE OF HENRY JAMES

By VAN WYCK BROOKS

"Being an American is a complex fate."

Criticism, as practiced by Van Wyck Brooks, is an ornament to American letters. Always true to his own rare talent, he has never descended to merely facile cleverness or diffused himself in casual trifles. Over "The Pilgrimage of Henry James" he has labored long, and he has soaked up so much of the essence of the great expatriate novelist that he even writes like him, a feat peculiarly emphasized by the incorporation into his text of whole phrases and even longer passages from James' writings. Perhaps only so could a certain precious, almost finicking quality in his author be captured.

Henry James once spoke of "having been so pierced betimes, by the sharp outland dart, as to be able ever afterwards but to move about, vaguely and helplessly, with the shaft still in one's side." Thereby he provided all future biographers with a vivid image for the thesis that is almost inevitable. James was somehow crippled by the environment which he could not do without. He must have Europe, "England on any terms;" yet always he was an alien there and he realized that, like Hawthorne, he "had forfeited a precious advantage in ceasing to tread his native soil."

All this, however, has been brought out in previous critiques. It was Henry James' devout belief, according to one of his own letters, that being an American "is a complex fate and one of the responsibilities it entails is fighting against a superstitious valuation of Europe." Brooks epitomizes the matter when he follows up this quotation with: "That was really the great battle of James' life, and who can deny that he lost it?"

The great battle it was of his life as a man, but his life as an artist affords a splendid roll of victories. Forty volumes bear his

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name and there is scarcely a careless or graceless line in any of them. He could capture a nuance of meaning in the gentle loop of a supple phrase where a lesser man might grope for whole chapters and still miss it entirely. He could paint pictures whose colors are still fast; go into any hotel dining room today and witness the horrid accuracy of his portrait of "the lone breakfasting child; the little, pale, carnivorous, coffee-drinking ogre or ogress who prowls down in advance of its elders, engages a table—dread vision!—and has the 'run' of the bill of fare."

James had the faculty peculiar to the veritable artist of living in his characters. Somewhere in Flaubert's letters—Flaubert who was always after James' memorable winter in Paris, an inestimable influence—there is a passage, perhaps the most beautiful thing ever written upon the utter absorption of the novelist in his mood. "A delightful thing it is," said the great Frenchman, "to write, to be no longer oneself, but to move through the whole creation one has called forth. Today, for example, man and woman together, lover and mistress at the same time. I have ridden in a forest, during an autumnal afternoon, under yellow leaves; and I was the horses, the leaves, the wind, the words that were said, and the red sun that caused them to half close their eyelids bathed in love."

Henry James, at his best, can attain to that. He can even abide the juxtaposition of his name with Flaubert's, and for what other American novelist would that not be mere mockery? But why will his critics not come to the point and admit him to have been a consummate snob? Brooks implies it in his text, and proves it again and again by quotation, yet seems indisposed to avow the fact. He can note "the simple piety with which so many of the characters in his earlier English stories turn to the fortunate ones of the earth, turn so to put it, as sunflowers turn to the sun." He recounts "The Siege of London" with conscientious amplitude. No doubt James wore his rue with a difference; his letters and the testimony of his friends now living witness the abounding charm of the man. But, as Mr. Brooks suggests, "he had subscribed, as only a probationer can subscribe, to the codes and scruples, the conventions and prejudices,

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the standards (held so lightly by everyone else) of the world he longed to possess." Thereby developed what W. C. Brownell has called "the gradual decomposition of his sense of human values."

It is needless to waste more of a prospective reader's time in extolling Mr. Brooks' volume. Perhaps it must be "caviare to the general," presuming, as it does, a certain knowledge of Henry James and a modicum of acquaintance with American letters in the second half of the last century. Those who come to it with these will find a book sophisticated, urbane and scholarly; full of overtones and resonant with finely modulated admiration.

NO MORE PARADES

By FORD MADOX FORD

"He saved others: himself he could not save."

Two men stood together on a high point and looked down "upon a great tapestry of the French landscape." One said: "This *beastly* war! This *beastly* war! Look at all that view"

The other said:

"It's an encouraging spectacle, really. The beastliness of human nature is always pretty normal. We lie and betray and are wanting in imagination and deceive ourselves, always, at about the same rate. In peace and in war! But, somewhere in that view there are enormous bodies of men. If you got a still more extended range of view over this whole front you'd have still more enormous bodies of men. Seven to ten million. All moving towards places towards which they desperately don't want to go. Desperately! Every one of them is desperately afraid. But they go on. An immense blind will forces them in the effort to consummate the one decent action that humanity has to its credit in the whole of recorded history. The one we are engaged in. That effort is the one certain creditable fact in all their lives. But the *other* lives of all those men are dirty, potty and dis-creditable little affairs. Like yours, like mine."

That is a queer, wrong-headed point of view, perhaps, but is there not in that passage hint of an ability to look at the World War, "and see it steadily and see it whole?" Ford Madox Ford is writing a trilogy; the first volume, "Some Do Not," purported to show the English Tory at home during war time; this book shows the same man "going up line." Perhaps the third one will render him in the line and "in process of being reconstructed." In the literary world Mr. Ford (formerly Ford Madox Hueffer) is something of a stormy petrel. Almost everything he writes has certain obvious

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faults of sentimentality and over-emphasis. This has made it easy for petty criticism to impale him neatly with very small pins. But in these clumsy, powerful, and, above all, intensely readable novels of the war and one Englishman, he is making literary history.

Like him or not—it is none too easy to like him—there is no denying that the man can write. When he touches the years of the Great Debacle he has the virtues which Lord Byron once declared should be paramount in an author, “learning, labor, research, wrath, and partiality.” These, said Lord Byron, are virtues because they make him write in earnest.

Ford Madox Ford is always in earnest. In an atmosphere of nerve-racked tenseness that never slackens for one moment during the forty-odd hours that span the book, he shows you Christopher Tietjen struggling with the monstrous web of petty difficulties and red tape that makes up his unromantic job of draft forwarding officer in a British base camp in France. Other men come and go, much as they pass in and out of the little circle of brazier light in Tietjen’s hut. Out of their own mouths they declare themselves; the swift, sure characterizations are brilliant. Gradually the complexity of all these lives, the muddle and apparent indifference of all that lies behind them, and the agonizing, hand-to-mouth worry of just keeping the show going are revealed as the incessant, excruciating accompaniment to Christopher Tietjen’s own private heartache.

His wife is an unmitigated bad lot. And he has a girl in England, whom he has never kissed. His wife is beautiful, well born and ill-bred, over-sexed and impossibly neurotic. His girl is small, blond and snub-nosed, the daughter of his father’s oldest friend.

Poor devil, to straighten things out in his own mind, he sat up in his flea bag with six blankets over him, at half past 2 in the morning and wrote in his note book, “attempting exactly to imitate a report to general headquarters”:

“When I married Miss Satterwaite, unknown to myself, she imagined herself to be with child by a fellow called Drake. I think she was not. The matter is debatable. I am passionately attached to the child, who is my heir and the heir of a family of considerable

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position. The lady was subsequently, on several occasions, though I do not know how many, unfaithful to me."

Poor devil, he sat there, middle-aged and bulky, fast growing gray, and thought about his wife whom his principles would not permit him to divorce, and thought about his girl whom his principles had not permitted him to kiss. An incredible fool perhaps. And yet the essential value of "No More Parades" (as of the earlier "Some Do Not") is that Tietjens is real—and a man—and in his way a damned smart man. When you have read the book you know him. He is vital, arrogant and dogmatic; his ideas are obsolescent. Those who say he is trying to act like Jesus Christ (a difficult role in war time!)—are probably right.

Old General Campion found Tietjens difficult enough. He was Tietjen's godfather and commanding officer; he thought him "brilliant but unsound." And when Mrs. Tietjens, contrary to all the ukases of the war office, arrived at the base in France and began playing hell with his staff and complaining that Tietjens had stolen two pairs of her best bed sheets, the old general saw red. It sounds like farce; it ought to be farce; yet somehow it is not. It is mocking, ironic tragi-comedy.

Instinctively one sympathizes with General Campion. "The general was afraid to talk. He practically never talked with anyone except about his job—certainly never with Tietjens—without being proved to be in the wrong, and that undermined his belief in himself." He was a wonderfully good regular officer, but he longed to get "back to an India where it was all real soldiering and good leather and parades that had been parades."

You are left with a vivid realization of how the people at the top, the "governing classes" of a few years back, fought the war to a sorry accompaniment of their own petty griefs and perplexities. General Campion worried about Tietjens and his wife; also he worried about getting command of a fighting army and eventually becoming viceroy of India. At the other end of the scale Tietjen's runner, once a miner in Wales, squatted on his heels in the cold hut and worried about a cow:

NO MORE PARADES

"A queer cow it must have been whatever. Black-and-white Holstein it was. . . . Took a hatred for its cawve. And look you, before you could say"

And the war went on steadily, reverberatingly, in spite of strange cows and wives that deviled their husbands. Without sleep, without rest, Tietjens stuck to his job. He sent his drafts up the line with their nine sets of papers and tags all in order. His own affairs he could not put in order. "He saved others, himself he could not save"—that was what they used to say about Christopher Tietjens, the queer, heavy, middle-aged officer, whose beautiful wife got out of hand.

MINIATURES OF FRENCH HISTORY

By HILAIRE BELLOC

"A pattern in the pageant of the years."

History with Hilaire Belloc is a sprightly business. Concentrating almost entirely on the highlights and accentuating them with subtle dexterity, he delights to detect a pattern in the pageant of the years. Needless to say, this is much easier to do in remote periods; no matter how deftly retouched or foreshortened, the contemporary or even the very recent scene is distressingly likely to betray chaos and contradiction.

Hilaire Belloc loves and understands France as only a man with French blood in his veins and some years of service under the tri-color behind him may love and understand her. He is a Roman Catholic who would perhaps confess proudly that his faith colors his historical philosophy. For him the church supplies a thread of meaning and continuity in the mazed and ragged tapestry that is European history.

In his "Miniatures," it is the scenes from the almost legendary wars of chivalry, Roland's great rear-guard action at Roncesvalles, the triumphant day at Tours when Christendom under Charles Martel broke the invading white-clad host of Islam, that are portrayed most powerfully. There are also some splendid scenes from the Crusades, full of the atmosphere of strange, fantastic grandeur that belongs to those enterprises.

Perhaps the queer, profitless outpouring of iron-clad men into the Holy Land remains still the most puzzling chapter in the history of Europe. Certainly it is the chapter which most stubbornly resists interpretation by the economic theory of history. So Hilaire Belloc naturally emphasizes and underscores it. It is indeed a cold heart that will not warm a little to his account of the capture of Jerusalem:

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"Then in one critical moment (it was just 3 o'clock) the desperation of those cries turned into a very different roar of cheers, and it was apparent that the wall was gained. One could see the besiegers spreading along the height of it, to the right and to the left, enfolding its defence, holding a wider and a wider gap, and the swords at either end of the line hacking and sweeping their way forward.

"And now (so many men having poured up the wall and along it) scraps of the many scaling ladders could be seen, and separate streams of men hurrying up them and re-enforcing the lengthening line above that held the battlements. Until at last all the defence was brushed away, from east to west, and for a half mile in one unbroken series the Crusaders were the masters of the rampart, and already men were hauling the scaling ladders over to descend into the city beyond.

"The men at the battering rams ran hard for the check-ropes, hanging desperately upon them to stop the swing, and the thuds ceased for the first time in all those hours. From the wooden tower also the attackers were scrambling down and racing towards the wall, and bringing new ladders and climbing it, now undefended.

"A lamentable confusion, masked by the screen of masonry, made up of scream and clamour, rose from the streets of the city within, as victory pressed on through the houses. Jerusalem had fallen; and already the first man in the race had thrust his palms against the walls of the Sepulchre, and sinking to his knees, collapsing, kissed it."

Louis IX, Saint Louis of the house of Capet, is obviously a favorite character with Mr. Belloc. In two interesting chapters he relates some of the king's whimsical conversation and describes his pious deathbed. That great monarch had a layer of ashes spread by his camp bedstead, and when his agony was upon him he insisted that he be placed on them so that he might "pass the more humbly." In such ostentatious yet wholehearted ceremony and symbolism was the faith of the Middle Ages made manifest.

With the coming of all that is implicit in the word "modernity" Mr. Belloc's miniatures become less fine and less inspiring. In his

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interpretation of history, neither the Reformation nor the Renaissance can come out in strong relief. It would be hard to get either Saint Bartholomew's Eve or Rabelais into the frame of one of his pictures. The story of the sixteenth century, that blood-stained chronicle of religious wars, pious treacheries and fratricidal conflicts, is only recognized in one short chapter which recounts the founding of the Jesuit order and relates the abortive attack on Francis II, called "The Tumult of Amboise." The seventeenth century, the gorgeous period of "matchless and incurable luxury," dominated by the figure of the fourteenth Louis, and the eighteenth century, with its almost unbelievable errors and follies that at last brought down the strongest monarchy in Europe, are dealt with somewhat cursorily.

From the nineteenth century there is an exquisite portrait of the last days of Chateaubriand. The old man returned to England in his seventy-fifth year to visit the heir to France in exile, young Comte de Chambord, Henry V of France that should have been. There is a splendid quotation from a letter which the aged ambassador and man of letters and the world wrote next day:

"The kings would have done well to have saluted this young ghost of a time outworn. They would have done well not to insult, as he passed, a traveler who had nothing to show but a broken sceptre in his hand. They laughed; they did not see that the world has grown tired of them, and that time will force them at last to take that same road as has been taken by the great royal line which protected them all and lent them a life which fails them now."

Incorporating thirty-one vigorous, partisan, high-colored little sketches, this volume is pleasantly biting and stimulating. It restores one's appetite for history. Mr. Belloc's partisanship does not destroy a whit of his charm. One remembers that Mr. Stanley Baldwin, only a few weeks ago, suggested that none but the one-sided and prejudiced historians make attractive reading for the amateur. The detached, dispassionate master-scholars can only be appreciated by the advanced and erudite.

IN OUR TIME

By ERNEST HEMINGWAY

"Vital, astringent, brittle—with the gusto of horse-racing and bull fighting."

At two o'clock in the morning two Hungarians got into a cigar store at Fifteenth Street and Grand Avenue. Drevitts and Boyle drove up from the Fifteenth Street police station in a Ford. The Hungarians were backing their wagon out of an alley. Boyle shot one off the seat of the wagon and one out of the wagon box. Drevitts got frightened when he found they were both dead. "Hell, Jimmy," he said, "you oughtn't to have done it. There's liable to be a hell of a lot of trouble."

"They're crooks, ain't they?" said Boyle. "They're wops, ain't they? Who the hell is going to make any trouble?"

"That's all right maybe this time," said Drevitts, "but how did you know they were wops when you bumped them off?"

"Wops," said Boyle, "I can tell wops a mile off."

That amiable incident may have been drawn from the rich annals of Kansas City's streets. I am inclined to think that it was, although the author, Ernest Hemingway, is now an outstanding figure in the group of young writers who find the perspective afforded by a residence in Paris helpful in depicting the contemporary American scene. This curious and interesting collection of stories and sketches is distinguished by a discriminating use of modern idiom and argot. The short sentences bite like acid; the infrequent expletives snarl and rumble like loaded trucks under a viaduct.

There are many adjectives which come easily to mind in an attempt to characterize the writing of Ernest Hemingway. Objective is one of the first of them; his stories are almost too artfully dis-anchored from his own emotions. Vital and astringent they are to a

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surpassing degree. His phrases are brittle, with mordant edges, and he has the inestimable gift of concrete visualization. In lean, spare sentences he always makes you see the thing he writes about. But what comes nearest to catching his peculiar quality is the everyday, vernacular term "hardboiled." This fellow is indubitably a hardboiled writer. He has a great feeling for the nonchalant, bleak-faced relish for life enjoyed by truck drivers and city detectives. He knows niggers, prize fighters, ex-marines and lonely men who go fishing. He gets at the very essence of young, fairly tough, boys, and he writes with gusto of horse racing and bull fighting.

It is very hard to resist quoting Mr. Hemingway. One wishes to share with others the conviction that something worth while has come to American letters with the advent of a new man who can give to common words a corrosive quality like that in the following tiny etching: "The bull charged and Villalta charged and just for a moment they became one. Villalta became one with the bull and then it was over, Villalta standing straight and the red hilt of the sword sticking out dully between the bull's shoulders. Villalta, his hand up at the crowd and the bull roaring blood, looking straight at Villalta and his legs caving."

With Sherwood Anderson and Ring Lardner this author shares a secret. They have discovered a rich vein of linguistic ore that lies just below the surface of every traffic way and freight dock, and they are all realizing on the lode. They seek to let the old, worn, literary metaphors retire to amply earned repose, since from the lips of every irascible towboat captain or badly frightened coon they hear vivid, startling figures drawn from the complex mechanical civilization of today.

Yes, even at sea a new language is being born; the beautiful, die-hard picturesqueness of the days of sail is now found less often between decks than between book covers. But the new sea lingo is not without its savor. I remember one black and gray morning off the Orkneys, when a squadron of 25,000-ton battleships were making heavy weather of it against the vicious, short sea that runs in those latitudes. A little weasel-faced signalman, perched on watch

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at the end of a bridge wing, wrinkled his nose distastefully against the flying spray, while the huge steel hull beneath him pounded and slammed along. "Say!" he yelled to the windy universe, "seems to me like the springs on this old bus are weakenin'!"

It is to sources like that that Mr. Hemingway owes some of the vigor of his style. Of course, "In Our Time" is admittedly a slight and fragmentary enterprise. It is, however, a promise, almost an assurance, of richer and more important things to come. A pianist who supples his fingers before essaying a Brahms' sonata, a pitcher warming up craftily in the bullpen, or a fighter shadow boxing under the arc lights before going to work in a cold ring; these are figures applicable to Ernest Hemingway in "In Our Time." By this collection he has established himself as a colorful and competent performer; when he tackles a real subject he should bring all the stands up cheering. More power to him!

THE DOVES' NEST

By KATHERINE MANSFIELD

"To snatch, in a moment of courage, a passing phase of life."

"I must try to write simply, fully, freely, from my heart. *Quality*, caring nothing for success or failure, but just going on

"But all must be told with a sense of mystery, a radiance, an after-glow."

Perhaps these two extracts from Katherine Mansfield's journal may help to do something which is not easy. I want to convey some notion of the delicate, flame-like quality of her final volume of short stories, "The Doves' Nest," published since her death last year. For this young Englishwoman really wrote as she desired; there is a haunting charm, an "afterglow" in her unassuming tales, whose naive, ephemeral plots become so strangely full of meaning. Katherine Mansfield's position in modern English letters now seems definitely established. Seldom has a writer been recognized as an artist of real distinction on the evidence of so slight a body of published work. In addition to "The Doves' Nest," there are only the stories in the "Bliss" and "The Garden Party" collections, together with the immature and now almost unobtainable "German Pension" sketches, to support her claim. Yet, high priests of her craft, like H. G. Wells, John Galsworthy and D. H. Lawrence—surely a contrastive, if not inimical trio—unite in according her a place among those whose work "has the rare flavor that endures." And a growing body of readers who usually shun anything which the literary people or "high-brow" critics commend are finding a new and peculiar delight in her stories.

That is why comparisons with Chekhov, because of her illuminating vision into the hearts of everyday people; or with Henry James, because of her exquisite sense of the significance in slight

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shades of speech and gesture seem, in a way, unfortunate. Such likenings are apt enough, but they may serve to intimidate some of the readers most susceptible to Katherine Mansfield's magnetism.

In "The Doves' Nest" there are only six complete stories and fifteen unfinished ones—mute witnesses to a talent cut down in the fullness of creative vigor. The author's husband, John Middleton Murry, who now edits the London *Adelphi*, contributes an unsigned preface containing extracts from her journal and pathetically intimate details of her manner of work. One wonders a little at the courage of such revelations.

Of the finished stories, the first, "The Doll's House," is a faithful cross-section of childhood. With what precision, what poignancy, it displays the unconscious cruelty of that much flattered period. What a picture she paints of the "Kelveys," the wistful pariahs in a group of nice little girls. Here is the younger one: "Her little sister, our Else, wore a long white dress, rather like a nightgown, and a pair of little boy's boots. But whatever our Else wore she would have looked strange. She was a tiny wishbone of a child, with cropped hair and enormous solemn eyes—a little white owl. Nobody had ever seen her smile; she scarcely ever spoke. She went through life holding on to Lil with a piece of Lil's skirt screwed up in her hand. Where Lil went our Else followed. In the playground, on the road going to and from school, there was Lil marching in front and our Else holding on behind. Only when she wanted anything, or when she was out of breath, our Else gave Lil a tug, a twitch, and Lil stopped and turned around. The Kelveys never failed to understand each other."

"Honeymoon," the second story, is a moment captured at the flood-tide of two lives; yet subtly, in the undertow, as it were, are suggested the vast gulf which must separate two personalities, the immense distance that may lie between loving and understanding. "A Cup of Tea," whose motif is only the old trite one of Lady Bountiful and the hungry little street girl, is delightful because of the fresh, deft touch which transforms it. The incident seems to tell

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itself, without acidity or pathos, yet so vividly that it is almost experienced.

But suddenly with "The Fly," a harsh note is struck. Much has been written concerning this story since it first appeared in an English magazine; it is indeed an amazing and unforgettable achievement. Such an atmosphere of numb, frustrate sadness created in something less than twenty-five hundred words! Nothing Katherine Mansfield ever wrote displays more perfectly her singular technique.

Concerning the unfinished stories, it would be unfair not to prepare the reader for a certain disappointment. All except three leave a distressing sense of bafflement, like music that dies away in the midst of a theme, and several are so incomplete as hardly to interest the general reader. "A Married Man's Story," "Six Years After" and the final sketch, "Widowed," do possess a certain inner completeness. They are alike, too, in their poignancy and their manner of catching the very feel of a fugitive moment. Is there not in the following quotation something of the essence of every gray channel crossing?

"It is extraordinary how peaceful it feels on a little steamer once the bustle of leaving port is over. In a quarter of an hour one might have been at sea for days. There is something almost touching, childish, in the way people submit themselves to the new conditions. They go to bed in the early afternoon, they shut their eyes and it's night, like little children who turn the table upside down and cover themselves with the cloth. And those who remain on deck—they seem to be always the same, those few hardened men travelers—pause, light their pipes, stamp softly, gaze out to sea, and their voices are subdued as they walk up and down. The long-legged little girl chases after the red-cheeked boy, but soon both are captured; and the old sailor swinging an unlighted lantern, passes and disappears."

In these last bits of Katherine Mansfield's work one feels an increased power, but with it a trace of a new corrosive quality, almost a bitterness. What were the different sorts of stories, which,

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as her journal shows, she longed to write? It is a fruitless question. Probably she would never again have skimmed so suavely over the surfaces of life as she did sometimes in "Bliss" and "The Garden Party."

Whether or not one regrets this growing somberness, this loss of buoyancy, one cannot but feel it was for her inevitable. Her purpose was that which Joseph Conrad has expressed so perfectly in one of his prefaces: "To snatch in a moment of courage, from the remorseless rush of time, a passing phase of life. . . . The task, approached in tenderness and faith, is to hold up unquestioningly, without choice and without fear, the rescued fragment before all eyes." For a modern short story writer, for any "worker in prose," that is a high creed. Yet Katherine Mansfield, beyond all question, is of those few to whom it may be imputed without irony.

A
A NOTABLE DISCOVERY OF
COOSNAGE, 1591

THE SECOND PART OF CONNY-CATCHING, 1592

CONNY-CATCHING, LAST PART, 1592

A DISPUTATION BETWEEN A HEE CONNY-CATCHER
AND A SHEE CONNY-CATCHER, 1592

By ROBERT GREENE

*Aristocratic pickpockets and humble cut-purses in
Shakespeare's London.*

These two quaint bits of Elizabethan journalism, bearing the imprint of the Bodley Head Quarto series, will afford anyone with an hour or two to spare a fascinating glimpse into the underworld of Shakespeare's London. Knavery in those days proves to have been very similar to that of our own time, and Robert Greene, in his aptitude for catching and making vivid the slang and vernacular of the world of crime, much resembles the present-day writers of special articles.

Organized swindling of all kinds, particularly cheating at cards or dice, was then called "conny-catching"—nowadays on Twelfth Street, Kansas City, you may hear the same thing referred to as "putting in the works." The victim or "conny" (an obsolete name for rabbit) is now sometimes called the "monkey." However, crime of all kinds was a more risky business then; even a petty thief, if convicted, was sure to "daunce on air at Tyburn," whereas our very murderers have little more to fear than "doing a few years' jolt in the stir" or "getting settled for a while at the Big House."

It is really amazing to find that human life was more respected in the stews of semi-savage Tudor England than it is in American cities today. In all Greene's accounts of desperate crimes and crim-

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inals there are few lives taken. Even the practitioners of "high law" or wayside brigandage hesitated to put their victims to cold steel.

Pickpockets were then the aristocrats of the underworld, much as the skilled "petemen" or safeblowers are today. Their contempt for the lowlier cut-purses is revealed by Greene in lively fashion:

"The Nip and the Foist, although their subjects is one which they work on, that is, a well lined purse, yet their manner is different, for the Nip useth his knife and the Foist his hand: the one cutting the purse, the other drawing the pocket; but of these two scurvy trades, the Foist holdeth himself of the highest degree, and therefore, they tearme themselves Gentlemen Foists, and so much disdain to be called Cut-purses, as the honest man that lives by his hand or occupation, in so much that the Foist refuseth even to wear a knife about him to cut his meat withal, lest he might be suspected to grow into the nature of the Nip. Yet, as I said before, is their subject and haunt alike, for their gaines lies by all places of resort and assemblies, therefore, all chiefe walkes is Paules, Westminster, the exchange, Plays, Beargarden, running at Tilt, the L. Maiors day, any festival meetings, fraies, shootings, or great faires; to bee short, wheresoever is any extraordinary resort of people, there the Nip and the Foist have fittest opportunity to show their jugling agilitie."

In this passage also is suggested what is truly one of the most astonishing features of the Elizabethan "crime wave," that is, that the old Cathedral of St. Paul's (not the present structure erected since the great fire), by all odds the dominant and most sacred building of London, was the chief haunt of criminals and the choice place for a crime. Professor Stevenson, in his book on Elizabethan London, says:

"The passage from north to south through the body of the cathedral by the transepts had become little more than a common alley across the holy precincts. The middle aisle of the nave, which was thrown open to the same usages, was familiarly known as Paul's Walk, and gave rise to the term a Paul's man, meaning one of the dissolute roisterers about town. . . . Assignations with lewd women

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were more frequently made in Paul's walk than in any other part of London save in the Bankside Stews."

Here, too, occurred more than half the remarkable swindlings and trickeries recounted by Greene. The last part of the second volume contains the gem of the collection, a naively humorous and entertaining "dispute between a hee Conny-catcher and a shee Conny-catcher," in which two crooks repair to a tavern to argue whether the male or female of the species is a more deadly plague to society. The loser of this amiable debate is to pay for the refreshment. From the first the lady has all the best of it. She proves that she and her sisters can do all the mischief which the men perform, and in addition have many a device which their brothers cannot imitate. However, Lawrence the Foyst is in no way a match for Nan, who appears to be both beautiful and amazingly erudite. "Cyrces had never more charms, Calipso more enchantments, the Syrens more subtil tunes, than I have crafty slights to inveagle a Conny, and fetch in a country Farmer."

What chance could the poor fellow have arguing with a girl like that? As she says, "Alas, good Lawrence, thou art no Logitian, thou canst not reason for thyselfe, nor hast no wittie arguments to draw me to and exigent."

Lawrence, beaten, owns up and pays his bet like a sportsman: "I confesse it, Nan, for thou hast tolde mee such wonderous villanies, as I thought never could have been in women, I meane of your profession, why you are Crocodiles when you weep, Basilisks when you smile, Serpents when you devise, and the divel's cheefest broakers to bring the world to distruction! And so, Nan, let's sit down to our meate and be merry."

Robert Greene knew only too well this depraved world of which he wrote. He was by his own confession perhaps the most dissolute of all the mad company of playwrights and poets that used to frequent the old Mermaid tavern. Too often he is remembered only for his slur at Shakespeare, "An upstart crow beautified with our feathers," who "is in his own conceit the only Shakescene in a country."

But Greene, by his own plays, proved himself a dramatist possess-

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ing an appreciable share of Shakespeare's power and abundant humanity. Moreover, he was a poet, a satirist and a pamphleteer, a swift and versatile craftsman, perhaps the foremost all-around man of letters of his age. A scholar, with degrees from both Cambridge and Oxford, he died in desperate and shameful degradation, utterly penniless, in a poor shoemaker's house near Dowgate. To the end he was faithfully nursed by his mistress, the wife of the notorious thief, "Cutting Ball." Greene died owing the shoemaker ten pounds. Just before the end he addressed this plaintive message to his wife, deserted many years ago: "Doll, I charge thee, by the love of our youth and by my soul's rest, that thou wilt see this man paid; for if he and his wife had not succored me, I had died in the streets.—Robert Greene."

THE PROFESSOR'S HOUSE

By WILLA CATHER

"In a cheerful, unselfconscious fashion—a very lonely man."

Although he possessed a show study downstairs, Professor St. Peter, sensitive, handsome and thoroughly likable, preferred to compose his *magnum opus*, his "Spanish Adventurers in North America," in a forlorn attic den. Like Anatole France's immortal M. Bergeret, he shared his workroom with "dress forms," spectral figures of his wife and daughters on which clothes were tried, symbols, perhaps, for Miss Cather of indomitable and ubiquitous femininity. The professor, though decorously devoted to the women of his family, found their society disquieting and far from stimulating. Primarily, they lacked any power of detachment from their own immediate interests. Recently he had acquired two sons-in-law, but, with the best will in the world, he could not find even their company exhilarating. He lived largely in the memory and inspiration of one friend, Tom Outland, a former pupil, who, had he lived, would have married his elder daughter. In a cheerful, un-selfconscious fashion, Professor St. Peter was a very lonely man.

His character is indubitably the most valuable attainment of Willa Cather's new novel. To create such a man, talented, whimsical without eccentricity, and innately attractive; to make him credible and complete, is a substantial accomplishment. As always, Miss Cather effects her portraiture through honest, simple craftsmanship. Her technique is all in the accepted tradition. Experiments of the moments—subjective analysis or psychological pointilism—have no place in her philosophy.

Professor St. Peter, with his vigorous masculine color and enthusiasm, is deftly centered within a revolving system of feminine selfishness. In this book Miss Cather is very hard on her own sex.

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There is something painfully convincing in the spectacle of Rosamond St. Peter and her florid, exuberant husband patronizing and condescending to all the little university town by reason of the wealth that her dead fiance's invention had created. The women of St. Peter's family lacked that superfastidious sense of fitness which might have guided their conduct through situations just on the border line between manners and ethics.

Once only, when the professor had returned from Chicago after what he called "an orgy of acquisition" with Rosamond, did he give way to bitterness. After dinner his wife, "studying his dark profile, noticed that the corners of his funny eyebrows rose, as if he were amused by something.

" 'What are you thinking about, Godfrey?' she said presently. 'Just then you were smiling—quite agreeably!'

" 'I was thinking,' he answered absently, 'about Euripides; how, when he was an old man, he went and lived in a cave by the sea, and it was thought queer, at the time. It seems that houses had become insupportable to him. I wonder whether it was because he had observed women so closely all his life?'

Now, the very essence and subtlety of Miss Cather's book lies in the fact that none of the women in St. Peter's household ever does anything that violates in deed the least of the canons of good society. Their jealousy, their spitefulness, their snobbery, are all nuances, shadows that are given depth by contrast with the generous, delicate-souled father. And, somehow, it is the very evanescence of their faults that makes them abominable.

The book closes on a note of tired resignation. But it is not only Professor St. Peter; one feels that Willa Cather, too, has grown a little weary of this household. The novel is marred somewhat by its tendency to wither at the conclusion. Such a fault is far from characteristic of the author; the endings of "One of Ours" and of "The Lost Lady" were marvelous bits of artistry; each book was sublimated and intensified by the last few pages.

Mention of "The Lost Lady" brings up the question of form. Probably no American fiction of recent years showed more perfec-

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tion and economy of structure than that short, poignant epic of a prairie gentlewoman. In "The Professor's House" Miss Cather has discarded, quite deliberately, no doubt, this compactness and tensility of architecture. She inserts into the middle of her book a long and almost unconnected discursion, a story within a story, Tom Outland's account of his archaeological adventuring in New Mexico. It gives Miss Cather opportunity for some of her best descriptive prose, and, in tone, the incident concords finely with the rest of the book, revealing as it does the helplessness of the detached, scientific spirit before the intrenched and practical workaday world.

Nevertheless its inclusion is an experiment, and a daring one. So considerable is Miss Cather's record of accomplishment that all she does is significant. In "The Professor's House" she has revealed once more the richness and inexhaustible variety of what Henry James used to call, with the faintest intimation of distaste, "the American scene." But it would be the acme of injustice to this author to rubber-stamp her novel with catch-phrases, such as "a study of the mid-western college town," or "story of the professional classes." That her creations are always individuals and never types is the epitome of Willa Cather's distinction.

MY MORTAL ENEMY

By WILLA CATHER

"The model of a full-rigged ship inside a bottle."

Technically this last book of Willa Cather's is a considerable feat, a real *tour de force*. Yet twenty readers will admire where one will enjoy "My Mortal Enemy." To press so much lonely bitterness and frustration into less than twenty thousand words, to portray a life's defeat so completely in miniature, is possibly beyond the skill of any other American writer. The book is a minute and tragic epic of egotism.

The mere outline of the story falsely suggests simplicity. Early in the 1880's, in a small Illinois town, Myra Driscoll renounced the fortune that would have come to her from her uncle, in order to marry the boy she loved. For some years she and Oswald Henshaw, steadily gaining foothold in New York, were reported to be happy, "as happy as most people." But as Nellie Birdseye, the stiff lay figure through whom Willa Cather has chosen to tell the story, remarks in a rare moment of penetration, "that answer was disheartening; the very point to their story was that they should be much happier than other people."

Even such ordinary bliss was not to last. The Henshawes encountered adversity, the enigmatic reversals of middle life, which do unquestionably bring down so many insouciant young couples of their sort. Oswald's career as a minor railroad official, a role for which he had never been inherently gifted, was terminated by a receivership and reorganization. Sickness laid a merciless hand on Myra and changed the gay, vital girl, the charming hostess to the world of the theater and the arts, into a bed-ridden, fiercely querulous invalid without hope and without solace. No longer, in the wretched combination of illness and poverty, was there room for any grace, any dignity.

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Like so many happy people, Myra had been able to live generously and yet wholly for herself. In the natural flowering of her personality others were incidentally made happy. She had enjoyed helping bewildered young actors in their love affairs, sending queenly gifts to lonely friends and even patronizingly and charmingly entertaining country cousins like Aunt Lydia and Nellie Birdseye. From the easy, comfortable New York of the 1890's Myra Henshaw, with her splendid vital energy, drove her life along like a smart carriage and pair.

In this book, as in a Greek play, Willa Cather chooses that all the catastrophes shall take place off stage. So there is an interval of ten years between the fast incidents in New York and the discovery by the omniscient Nellie Birdseye of the Henshawes, shabby, lonely, weighed down by illness and indigence, in a shoddy apartment house of a West Coast city. Myra Henshaw is dying, daily withdrawing deeper into herself, as the defeat of her inordinate demands on life becomes more complete. Oswald is caring for her beautifully, tenderly, with the quixotic and the indomitable devotion of an idealist. His love, the one exquisite thing life has left her, only irritates Myra. It is the best stroke in the book that Miss Cather makes this credible and comprehensible. "Tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner." Myra dies alone with herself, with that pitiless exorbitant self that she could never for one moment escape, truly, her "Mortal Enemy."

A somber tale, surely. It would be pleasant to escape the conviction that it is explicitly and uncompromisingly true. Miss Cather has deftly told Myra's story entirely through prosaic little incidents all taking place in a humdrum every-day atmosphere. This creates an infernal effect of realism, like the bleak light which streams into an ugly room through north windows at noonday.

By dwarfing the stature of her book and forcing her readers to see the entire drama through the eyes of a scarcely interested and certainly uninteresting spectator, Miss Cather has created difficulties for herself, which for the most part she conquers. But why create them? Surely classic restraint and tranquility do not demand

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absolute baldness of treatment. Flaubert dreaded a word too much, but he equally abhorred an incident or a portrait too few. Here both Oswald Henshawe and Nellie, the teller of the tale, are sketches irritatingly incomplete. If the device of Nellie is to be used at all why should she not be decently accounted for, satisfactorily interwoven into the strands of the story?

Lonely sailors and prisoners of war have been known to produce models of full-rigged ships inside of bottles, but it is not recorded that their frigates were more perfect or more life-like for being so constricted.

PETER THE CZAR

By KLABUND

(Translated by Herman George Scheffauer)

"All of Russia, the best and the worst, was in the man."

Be warned; this is a violent book! Anyone seeking a temperate, well documented monograph on Peter the First, czar of Russia, should certainly look elsewhere. For the space of one hundred and fifty pages this little book howls like a wolf on a cold night, whines and whimpers like a sick bear and occasionally breaks into singing staccato free verse. A writer on one of the Berlin papers has called "Peter the Czar" a "furiosum"; as far as this reviewer is concerned, he has named it.

Peter, chief national hero of the old Russian empire, combined in himself the qualities of George Washington, Sir John Falstaff, and Ghenghis Khan, the savage Mogul emperor. He was a supremely successful organizer and statesman, and a buffoon; a victorious general and admiral, yet an arrant coward on occasion; a Gargantuan drinker and eater, a colossal Don Juan who by some accounts left several hundred living children, yet he was capable of living for long periods in ascetic simplicity and abstinence. All of Russia, the best and the worst, was in the man; it is probably impossible to name another ruler who exemplified so perfectly the full range of the qualities of his people.

But a writer attempting today to portray this many-sided giant is confronted with a curious situation. The material before him assays at about one hundred pounds of legend for every few ounces of facts. The inventive energy of the Russian folk from the Caucasus to the steppes has been turned to creating stories of Czar Peter. And what legends they are! Often they contain more of the

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reality of what Peter has meant to his subjects than dry facts could ever contain, just as the discredited cherry tree story of George Washington does faithfully reveal a whole people's conception of his integrity. If the cherry tree story were multiplied a thousandfold, and if we had to depend for most of what we know of Washington upon extravagant and palpably false stories illustrating real and indubitably genuine traits of character, the status of Peter the First as an historic figure would be approximately paralleled.

In view of this, a biographer's chief task consists of what might be called "creative selection." Here Klabund is superbly competent. He has a true artist's feeling for the details which bring color and catch the rhythm of titanic barbarous forces. Under Peter the Russian giant stirred from his sleep of centuries and with rude, hairy hands pushed back Asia and made contact with a Europe that had progressed in strange and miraculous ways while he slumbered. From the day of his birth Peter lived in an atmosphere of intrigue, bloody treachery and horror. But always his people loved him. Klabund paints a vivid, probably apocryphal picture of his first contact with his subjects:

At sixteen years of age Peter was proclaimed czar. There he stood in the glaring blaze of moon on the terrace in front of the church and looked down upon the heaving mass of the people—who kept on throwing caps, flowers, shawls, jackets and kerchiefs into the air and crying: "Long live Peter the czar!"

Sofia took him by the hand and led him forward to the balustrade.

Then suddenly he grew aware of himself.

He broke away from Sofia, sprang upon the balustrade, threw his fur cap into the air and bellowed: "Long live Russia!" Sofia had staggered back.

Prince Galizyn swayed his bird-like head to and fro.

The patriarch held his hands folded in prayer.

The people clamored and raved out of sheer joy.

Soon Peter resolved he would learn to know his people. Fre-

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quently, dressed as a gardener's boy, he would escape from his palace. "He mixed among the ostlers, traders, peasants, workmen, strange sailors. From them he learned how to fight and drink, how to curse and how to seek for God and the devil. He was as strong as a bear. There were few who cared to tackle him."

On the seal which the young czar had made for himself was this device: "I know nothing. I can do nothing. I want to know all things. I want to be able to do all things. He who teaches me shall be welcome." Europe was to be his teacher. Peter's grand tour over the continent was grotesque and wonderful. "The Russians wore caps of fur, an ell in height, and even in the heat of summer the thickest furs. They lugged countless holy ikons about with them, weighing many pounds, and they made their devotions in front of these every few moments." Their manners were dreadful. Klabund shows Peter on one occasion "lying in his chamber, with his dirty boots in a damask bed and planning how he might use the Prussians against the Poles and the Swedes. Upon a console over the mantelpiece a pair of porcelain lovers were dancing a minuet. He flung copper coins at the statuette until it was shattered to pieces."

No one need believe that he returned from Europe just in time to quell a revolt of his bodyguard, "driving a team of wolves." But there is a certain symbolic truth in the picture. Perhaps after the celebration of his great victory over the Swedes, Peter did not "dance upon the table like a child." Standing six feet seven and a half as he did it does not seem probable. But the picture of his dancing there, "laughing and howling like one demented," is unforgettable.

Klabund has strange visions. There is a moment when Peter is drinking in a tavern with peasants. The apeman, the big mad sailor, who is really the czar, breaks into song:

"I am Peter, son of the peasant Ivan.

My mother was the steppe.

I carry a falcon on my shoulders.

A red nightingale sings in the cage of my heart.

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With all my arrows I shot down the golden balls on the steeples of the Cathedral of Kieff.

Look up the round golden buttons of my waistcoat, they are the balls from the steeples of Kieff."

Perhaps in order to reveal fully this concept of savage, dynamic power sweeping like a whirlwind over the steppes, Klabund has slighted somewhat the human side of the czar. Walliszewski, in his "Life of Peter the Great," tells one anecdote that illustrates a side of Peter which must have existed, but of which Klabund gives little inkling. The czar on one occasion was inspecting the streets of St. Petersburg with his chief of police, whose duty it was to keep them in condition. A broken down bridge stopped the czar's carriage. He alighted and sent for materials with which to repair the breach. He even put his hand to the work himself, then, when it was finished, laying down his tools, he seized his *doubina*, and without a word, bestowed a hearty thrashing on the chief of his police. This done, the sovereign returned to his carriage and beckoned to him to take his place beside him. "Sit down, brother," he said, and quietly took up the thread of a conversation which had been interrupted by the incident. No doubt that proved an effective method of maintaining the morale of his street department. There was a certain rough justice about most of Peter's ferocity, and Klabund usually hints deftly at the method behind his apparent madness.

Throughout this little book there is a lofty, epic quality in its very fury that resembles nothing so much as it does the mood of "Tamburlaine," "the Duchess of Malfi," and other great Elizabethan tragedies of blood. "Peter the Czar," is a strange, exotic triumph; H. G. Scheffauer's English translation is masterly. It is said that the German, Alfred Henschke, who writes under the pseudonym of Klabund, is a very sick man, living much alone in a remote Swiss snow-clad valley. What turbulent dreams must torment and bewitch him in his solitude.

NIGGER HEAVEN

By CARL VAN VECHTEN

"The strange interfluence of the jungle and the apartment house."

The saucy, meretricious cleverness of Carl Van Vechten has here fastened upon a subject considerably beyond his powers; yet certainly he is to be acclaimed for recognizing poignant tragi-comic possibilities in what the jargon of the intelligentsia has termed the new negro.

The new negro is usually a mulatto, ranging in tint from a little off "pink" to a shade this side of "blue." Often he seeks in the great democracy of art an escape from racial inferiority. Sometimes, if his complexion permits, he solves his problems by "passing," crossing the deadline into the white realm with the aid of a slight Spanish or Portuguese accent.

Nigger Heaven is Harlem, "the city of refuge," now the capital of the modern negro world. There colored artists, colored capitalists and colored social leaders play with gusto at the game of white civilization; it is as though a troupe of mocking black comedians performed with high shrieking laughter and occasional moments of grim solemnity a preposterous burlesque of the life of Broadway, Wall Street, and Fifth Avenue.

Carl Van Vechten's novel of this strange interfluence of the jungle and the apartment house, the Congo and the skyscraper, certainly does not lack color. Yet it is disappointing, for it might have been so much more than a piquant and startling stunt. Van Vechten is too shallow, too facile. His book is just another synthetic product, the result of quick observation and journalistic astuteness.

Byron Kasson, a dusky young intellectual, comes to Harlem, as so many of his pale *confreres* have sought New York, in order to "write." He finds that he has more aptitude for making love than

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literature; golden-brown sirens prove more tractable than magazine editors. H. L. Mencken, thinly disguised as Durwood, editor of the *American Mars*, gives the boy some sound, sententious advice. In "Nigger Heaven" Mr. Mencken seems to be the only "ofay" (Harlemese for white man) honored with a speaking part of more than three lines.

In spite of the well wishes of the stormy petrel of American letters and the sweet, pure love of a refined, high-yellow librarian, Byron Kasson goes wrong. He falls victim to Lasca Sartoris, a cosmopolitan Cleopatra, whose path all the way from the Louisiana camp-meetings to Paris is strewn with broken hearts and wrecked lives. Van Vechten obviously knows more about wild women than he does about negroes. Lasca is a lively and seductive enchantress; but Byron, as the gifted negro boy running amuck, plunging into final catastrophe by stamping on and shooting a man already thoroughly filled with lead, is simply preposterous.

"Nigger Heaven" is less like a novel than a personally conducted tour through the diamond-studded black belt of New York. The "Scarlet Creeper," who preys upon women, and the "Bolito King," who profiteers in "hot dogs," gambling hells and real estate, promenade proudly through its pages. There are the serious and unutterably tedious chaste intellectuals (I remain unconvinced that any negroes could be as tiresome as Mary, the literary librarian, George Lister, the dapper dentist, or Howard Allison, the long-winded attorney-at-law).

Then there is the almost incredible negro fast set, which "does everything the Long Island fast set does; plays bridge, keeps the bootlegger busy, drives around in Rolls-Royces and commits adultery, but is more amusing than the Long Island set for the simple reason that it is amused."

With Mr. Van Vechten you may attend the balls of the negro "four hundred," or look in on splendid and gorgeously wicked cabarets which make such black and tan joints of a few years ago, as Purcell's in San Francisco, or Kansas City's own "Sugar Bob's," seem shabby and insignificant.

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To admirers of "Peter Whiffle," "The Tattooed Countess" and "The Blind Bow-Boy" it may seem rank *lese majeste* to suggest that "Nigger Heaven" would be a truer and more entertaining book were its author more conspicuously equipped with a sense of humor. Of wit he possesses an abundant and delightful quota, but with snickering, chuckling humor the gods did not bless him. Without that the negro world may be exotic and mysterious; it will never, since it is always laughing at itself, be comprehensible.

America has taken the negro from the jungle and laid on him the burden, not only of her own civilization, but of a dozen other vast titanic civilizations which the erudition of the Renaissance and the research of the nineteenth century have resurrected from the past of humanity. Is it strange that the result after two or three generations of freedom should be conflict and confusion? Rather is it not remarkable that artists as sane and sanguine as Roland Hayes, Paul Robeson and Rudolph Fisher should have arisen so soon among them? There are over ten million negroes in America. It is a humiliating reflection on our perspicacity that a book like "Nigger Heaven" must be hailed as remarkable because it at least seems aware of the instant and grotesque complexity of their existence.

EVOLUTION AND OPTIMISM

By LUDWIG STEIN

"An optimist for humanity—a new philosophy of perfectability."

Germany is still the acknowledged modern moth of philosophy. Some peculiarity of the Teutonic mind seems to make it particularly sympathetic to the intricacies of metaphysical systems. In this book Dr. Ludwig Stein, the distinguished philosopher and sociologist who has held chairs both in the universities of Berne and Berlin, expounds his own brand of "social optimism," and the result, while lacking the persuasive charm and literary excellence of such writers as Bergson, Nietzsche and our own William James, does afford an interesting analysis of what Dr. Stein calls "that tendency in science which has inscribed the possibility of perfection for human nature upon its banner."

This author is not in the least interested in optimism as a personal problem. "Whether the individual," he says, "derives an increment of pleasure or displeasure from life, depends not at all upon his personal outlook upon the world, nor upon his evaluation of world occurrences, but rather upon his temperament, the composition of his blood, his inclinations and the opportunity to put them into action." Dr. Stein is an optimist for humanity—not for the individual, and those who approach his book with the hope of meeting a genial, Teutonic Dr. Frank Crane will be sadly disappointed.

There is no denying that man's mind is an organism that unceasingly seeks some philosophy, some system of truth which will resolve for it the seeming chaos of the universe. Friedrich Ratzel once remarked that "after we have come to know the scientific view of the world as a cover which is too small and moreover has some holes, we have been forced to turn again to philosophy." Then, too, there is a famous epigram of Taine's that "Without a philosophy the

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scholar is but an artisan and the artist but a buffoon." However, speaking from the standpoint of the ill-informed layman in this matter of determining a creed of optimism or pessimism as regards the large course of human affairs, Dr. Stein does not quite come to grips with what the man in the street sees as reality.

Setting to one side the happy auguries of the late war, what is there in the course of mankind's history to make for a rosy view as to our future on this planet? No doubt sufficient of such evidence exists; one can call to mind a certain amount for oneself, but the causes which have shaped the melioristic philosophy of a savant like Dr. Stein would be valuable knowledge. Here, however, as he says, he "shows not a workshop but only display windows; not raw materials, but only finished products."

Since he admits that the goal of his optimistic hopes for the race lies almost infinitely in the future, what reason has he for believing that it will be reached before the world becomes untenable for living forms of any kind? In Europe the "optimism of reason" of the eighteenth century and the "optimism of liberalism" of the nineteenth have signally failed to redeem their promises. 1914 sounded the final death knell for both those auspicious illusions. Now, with a hopeful and touching confidence Dr. Stein turns to the prosperous shores of the New World: "Youthful, vigorous America," he says, "must step into the breach and rescue West European-American civilization from destruction."

For the United States and the modern American spirit Dr. Stein has nothing but praise. No doubt he felt a courteous guest's obligation to eschew unfriendly criticism, for all the chapters of "Evolution and Optimism" were originally delivered as lectures in American universities. In each chapter Dr. Stein considers the optimistic tendency of some well known philosopher such as Muensterberg, Hartmann, James, Keyserling or Nietzsche, and demonstrates wherein his tenets differ and wherein they parallel his own. But this sort of esoteric tilting has little meaning for the general reader, who lacks that easy familiarity with the nuances in Spinoza, Kant and Leibnitz, that comprehension of some parts of this book implies.

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Dr. Stein reserves a few words of severe disapproval for the pessimism of the gloomy Schopenhauer and for the somber prophecies of Dr. Oswal Spengler, whose "Decline of Western Civilization" has recently had a great success in Europe. Yet it must be confessed that both these morbid and funereal gentlemen make livelier reading than does the earnest apostle of hope and brightness, Dr. Ludwig Stein.

Nevertheless, occasional fragments of his less technical musings do unquestionably linger in the memory even of the philosophically unenlightened. When he says, using a striking figure, that "the gold reserves of morality which Judaism and Christianity had accumulated through three thousand years of joint effort, have melted away, as in the case of the assignats of the French Revolution, the Russian ruble, and the German paper mark," he has expressed succinctly a truth which has distended the admonitions of the press, the politicians and the clergy of all countries for some time. And, in one brilliant, excellently expressed paragraph, he comes near to explaining completely the average man's distrust of metaphysics of all kinds. It is worth quoting:

"Every explanation of the world is but a finer or coarser anthropomorphism. It is always the unity of our self that we lend to the hypostasized unity outside, the unity of the world-ground, of the universe or God. Both types of metaphysical systems, mechanism and theology, feel the inner necessity of thought for objectifying the unifying function of consciousness, projecting it to something external, to something trans-subjective—and—by virtue of mankind's immanent need of unity or order—both types feel the necessity to think of that which has been projected outside by itself, as existing in something external, whether this 'external' is called atom, matter, not-I, or nature."

No doubt he did not intend in that paragraph to put systematic philosophy in an unfavorable light, and perhaps, for a profound and thoroughly *desabuse* scholar, the thought he expresses will not do so; but the ordinary man, once he realizes that closed philosophic systems are simply cocoons spun out of his own mind to fit the

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pattern of his own brain and sense perceptions, is apt to regard them merely as intricate exercises in futility.

On the tomb of the great German thinker, Leibnitz, is inscribed this epitaph: "The spiral inclines only to rise again to a higher level." A less sanguine and extremely impertinent picture of Dr. Stein's progress comes irrelevantly to mind as a reader, ill-equipped for such exercise, tries to retrace the convolutions of his conception of human advancement in the pages of "Evolution and Optimism." Dr. Stein, having inscribed "perfectability" upon his banner, has now shouldered it and is marching around and around in slow and magnificent circles.

THE WORLD OF WILLIAM CLISSOLD

By H. G. WELLS

"In the kingdom of the blind, a one-eyed man is a king."

"All things flow." From Heraclitus, the Greek philosopher, Mr. Wells has borrowed words to epitomize the world of William Clissold, which is, incidentally, the world of all modern, informed intelligence. Down immense vistas, both of the past and of the future, man of today watches the human race, whirling, rising and falling, like a cloud of frightened midges. And intense awareness of this quality of flux in life distinguished William Clissold, sleek, sixty, and successful to the point of boredom in the narrow channel of his business career. For him personal success was not enough; he wanted to be sure that mankind was, on the whole, a going concern.

So, comfortably and securely poised in a little country house high above Grasse, overlooking a great expanse of Riviera hills softened by olives and black cypresses, with just a glimpse in the distance of the blue Mediterranean, William Clissold examined his world. At pleasant intervals in this appraisal he dallied with Clementina, last of the long procession of his loves. Her he had rescued from the pavements of Paris. By her companionship the serenity and detachment essential to his task were made complete.

The novel thus supposedly evolved is really one man's intellectual and moral stock-taking. Mr. Wells protests in a slightly irascible foreword that it is not his own self-appraisal. Unquestionably William Clissold is a livelier fellow than Mr. Wells, and certainly his hypothetical scientific attainments exceed those of his creator, who, although he is science's supreme publicity agent, has never done much original work in that field. Wells and Clissold are both Liberals of the sort that distrust the Liberal party and align their hopes behind the banner of a cautious internationalism.

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Both have been successful in almost any material sense in which the term may be used. Both have had opportunity of knowing their most interesting contemporaries; and Wells performs the amusing trick (it amounts to nothing more) of causing actual celebrities to walk on and off his stage. Bernard Shaw (the Shaw of the '80's) appears for a moment, "a lean young music critic in his celebrated Jaeger costume." Lord Buckmaster, Sir Alfred Mond, and Gordon Selfridge are presented as practical men of whose potential statesmanship William Clissold has hopes. Dr. Jung, the Zurich psychoanalyst, appears once in person, but more important by far is the influence which some of his ideas have had upon the whole book. Wells also makes much of the conception that the sexual impulse is not an isolated and separate urge, but simply an aspect of the will to power. This idea he owes, presumably, to Adler, Jung's psychological antecessor.

Royalty with its innocuous pomp and parades, its "closed-off streets and oafish spectators," does not please William Clissold. His remarks thereon have aroused a unanimous growl of protest from all the bulldogs of the Tory press. Really his criticisms of the crown are mild and good-tempered enough, but they do give Mr. Wells opportunity to fall into one magnificent *non sequitur*. "The result of maintaining political forms that are beneath human dignity and religious pretentions that are beneath human belief is to impose a derisive cynicism upon great multitudes of people who *would otherwise live full and vigorous lives*." Why, Mr. Wells, would they necessarily live them?

Old William Clissold does a deal of reminiscing about his love affairs in these volumes, never omitting the pious pretense that they serve to illustrate important phases of his conception of the future world-state. Really, I suspect, he enjoys stirring up the ashes of his youth like any of the rest of us. Certainly the perusal of his amours provides a welcome change after long dogmatic chapters on "History of Toil Through the Ages," "Publicity," "Money," and "The Reincarnation of Socialism." Clissold may boast that at sixty he does not feel the approach of age, but his claim would be more

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credible could he summarize more deftly this verbose and repetitious philosophizing.

Almost every subject that may puzzle or attract modern intelligence is discussed or at least mentioned in these pages. William Clissold seems to have written the book with one or two volumes by that "distant relative of mine named Wells" close at his elbow. "Boon, the Mind of the Race," and "The New Machiavelli" have apparently been frequently consulted. Some new ideas have sifted in among the old ones, but hardly enough to justify two closely printed volumes. And the charm, the full-flavored, inescapable humanity that distinguishes the three or four really fine novels of Mr. Wells are here sadly to seek. "The World of William Clissold" is top heavy with dogma and irrelevant garrulity.

Such unity as the book possesses is of a sort quite outside the canons of the novelist's art. This makes Mr. Wells' statement in the foreword that the book is presented "as a complete, full-dress novel" a little surprising. Granted that more thought, more sheer brain power have gone into this book than into a dozen ordinary novels, still, from Mr. Wells, "The World of William Clissold" is disappointing. Passages of charming description and vivid characterization are met now and then; there is still much of his old power to create emotional intensity in one or two paragraphs. One nugget of pure gold is Clissold's interview with Walpole Stent, the superbly pompous and asinine public schoolmaster. And there are many other 18-carat bits. The conception and effortless grasp of history used to create William Clissold's cosmos is little short of magnificent.

What, then, is the matter with the book? William Clissold is a blatant materialist; a greedy, lively intelligence as devoid of any of the qualities which, for want of a better term, are called spiritual, as an amoeba or an adding machine. Well and good, such men do live and prosper; in an objective creation by Mr. Wells such stark, complete realization of the type is thoroughly creditable. But latent somewhere in the pages of so long a novel ought to be the suggestion

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that his Creator realizes William Clissold to be a rather shabby specimen.

One can imagine many sorts of people who might make this bumptious, lecherous, inquisitive little mining engineer appear, if not to himself, at least to the reader, very small indeed. William Clissold never meets them. The priests are all charlatans; nearly all the men of affairs, mountebanks, and the women venal puppets. With all their faults the Clissolds, William and his fat brother, Dickon, are unquestionably the best of the lot. "In the kingdom of the blind a one-eyed man is a king." Fortunately, however, it is very improbable that sightlessness in the actual world is quite as common a deformity as it seems to be in "The World of William Clissold."

THE PERSONAL EQUATION

By LOUIS BERMAN

EVERYMAN'S GENIUS

By MARY AUSTIN

"The great enigma of the self—unsolved and baffling."

More and more as the ground is cleared a little and the mysteries of man's immediate environment recede before the swing of science's bright ax, the great enigma of the "self," the "personality," looms up, unsolved and baffling. From divergent angles these two books grope for solution of the eternal problem, what the poet calls "the power of thought—the magic of the mind." Dr. Berman would simplify the psyche into the resultant of various chemical processes for which the ductless glands serve as regulators and stimulants. Mrs. Austin maintains that genius, generally accepted as the supreme manifestation of the personality, is simply the "free play of the racial inheritance into the immediate life of the individual."

For the layman Dr. Berman's book makes close and interesting reading. He deftly includes without tedious or obvious summarizing much recent and little known work in biology, biochemistry and genetics. Moreover, his volume is throughout refreshingly non-technical. He is evidently widely read in literature and history, and he correlates late scientific theory with long accepted historic facts in a highly entertaining and ingenious manner. No one who has read Bernard Shaw's play or Anatole France's study of Joan of Arc can remain unmoved by the doctor's analysis of the immortal maid as a "hypothyroid eunuchoid." But it is most unlikely that anyone will be pleased with this diagnosis.

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Aside from all question of proof, his baldly mechanistic and materialistic philosophy must tend to fade color and romance from the world. The notion that an individual at his debut is simply "an arrangement of Mendelian units" will always encounter emotional resistance from fond mothers. The doctor himself puts the question: "Are we gland-controlled marionettes?" and his answer, though scientifically circumspect and non-committal, is too near the affirmative to be palatable to the average man.

In perusing "The Personal Equation," it is well to remember that the author belongs to the advance guard, the radical left, so to speak, of his profession as regards the significance of the endocrine glands. Much competent medical authority might be cited to prove that the gland theory is in grave danger of being exalted beyond its merits. Like psycho-analysis, its dramatic appeal is so great that the layman is more prone than the professional to accept it at one swallow. The unquestionable demonstration that many of the gravest disorders of childhood may be corrected by proper gland treatment offers great hopes for the future. If one is discouraged by some of the more pessimistic inferences to be drawn from Dr. Berman's thesis, there is consolation in the thought that much of it remains to be fully verified.

"Everyman's Genius" is more flattering to the sensitive ego. Mrs. Austin believes that we are all potential geniuses; it is merely a matter of educing our racial inheritance from the layers of the subconscious self. All true creative work, she maintains, is done at a level below the immediate self. In her pages there is much talk of intuition and unknowing; the creative act, it appears, may be greatly facilitated by various sorts of prayers and incantations.

So much charm inheres in all that Mrs. Austin writes that one is very loathe to be less than just to her. She is herself a writer of long acknowledged talent and is intensely sincere in her conviction that really artistic or practical gifts lie just below the surface in every healthy individual. But persons of an innately prosaic and matter-of-fact trend are likely to find her methods savoring unduly of hypnotism and hocus-pocus. Perhaps the most interesting portion

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of her book is the appendix, wherein successful practitioners of various arts and professions try to explain their own creative processes. No doubt the examples are hand-picked to prove Mrs. Austin's theory, but their inclusion does demonstrate that many talented people feel that the essence of their gifts lies in the subconscious self.

Indeed, the most skeptical will probably find "Everyman's Genius" inspiring and stimulating in many ways. The author's personality pervades her pages with peculiar grace. By the sheer adroitness of even her most incredible hypotheses the reader's thoughts are turned up channels where a little thinking on one's own account is most salubrious. Any further researches in psychology and cerebral physiology may yet establish some of what now seem her most improbable postulates.

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

THE SUN ALSO RISES

By ERNEST HEMINGWAY

"The Green Hat of Michael Arlen knocked out of shape."

Ernest Hemingway seems here to have borrowed the Green Hat of Michael Arlen, knocked it out of shape, kicked it across the room once or twice, and then gone off to a bull fight wearing its remains pulled pugnaciously down over one eye. Personally, I prefer Green Hats worn that way; rowdiness is more palatable when it does not simultaneously affect romanticism and sentimentality. Thus described, "The Sun Also Rises" may appear a lesser novel than it really is. Mr. Hemingway, who once served an apprenticeship to letters on The Kansas City Star, writes with a swinging, effortless precision that puts him in the very first flight of American stylists. There is almost no lost motion in his sentences; his phrases carry to their mark with a very flat trajectory.

To characterize "The Sun Also Rises" more concretely, it is a lively account of a couple of weeks spent by a small group of American and English expatriates who make highly irregular headquarters at Paris. During most of the book they are engaged upon a visit to Spain, where they fish, see bull fights, and drink the wine of the country out of goat skins. All their journeying is related in great detail; it is a mannerism of Hemingway's to recount exactly his characters' physical evolutions, through doors, up and downstairs, in and out of bed, as though establishing alibis.

The relations of the group are rather mixed. Lady Brett Ashley, a not too immaculate dove, is the decoy at its center. Jake Barnes tells the story; he represents an American newspaper syndicate at Paris and aspired to be Lady Brett's sweetheart. Robert Cohn, a well-mannered young ineffectual, had once spent a week-end with Lady Brett at San Sebastian; he had never got over it. Mike Camp-

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bell of Scotland is Lady Brett's present fancy and they consider marrying if divorces and finances can be arranged. Bill Gorton is present simply as Jake's friend, sharing his tastes for fishing and bull fighting. Lady Brett herself is really not as impossible as she sounds. She is a well portrayed example of the absolutely improvident, disorderly young woman, whose nonchalance is, possibly, a new development since the war.

To anyone who has watched in out-of-the-way parts of the world the backwash of the war generation living leisurely, reckless lives, there is more truth in Mr. Hemingway's novel than a casual reader might be ready to admit. Ever since 1918 the continent has been home for a good many young Americans who certainly do not take their Europe a la Henry James. Gertrude Stein told Ernest Hemingway once, "You are all a lost generation," and the remark seems to have impressed him unduly. The gentle tug of the ordinary tides of life, business, marriage, getting-on-in-the-world, have set most of the stranded ships afloat again. Jake Barnes's generation is not "lost," though it has suffered heavy casualties. And, as the book demonstrates quite effectively, they are not all dead yet.

In fact, as the novel also testifies, in sprightly fashion, some of them are having a pretty good time. It is hard not to wish one had been on that fishing trip with Jake and Bill Gorton, before trouble, with Lady Brett as its storm center, caught up with them. One could listen with pleasure to a good many of Bill's alcoholically glorified "travel stories," or to Mike Campbell's "war stories." The one about his medals is worth quoting; it reveals to the life a certain type of Scotchman:

"Tell him about your medals," Brett demanded.

"I'll not," said Mike. "That story reflects great discredit on me."

"What medals have you got, Mike?"

"I haven't got any medals."

"You must have some."

"I suppose I've the usual medals. But I never sent in for them. One time there was this whopping big dinner, and the prince of Wales was to be there, and the cards said medals will be worn. So, natural-

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ly, I had no medals, and I stopped at my tailor's and he was impressed by the invitation, and I thought that's a good piece of business, and I said to him: 'You've got to fix me up with some medals.' He said: 'What medals, sir?' And I said: 'Oh, any medals. Just give me a few medals.' So he said: 'What medals have you, sir?' And I said: 'How should I know?' Did he think I spent all my time reading the bloody gazette? 'Just give me a good lot. Pick them out yourself.' So he got me some medals, you know, miniature medals, and handed me the box; and I put it in my pocket and forgot it. Well, I went to the dinner, and it was the night they'd shot Henry Wilson; so the prince didn't come, and the king didn't come, and no one wore any medals, and all these coves were busy taking off their medals, and I had mine in my pocket."

He stopped for us to laugh.

"Is that all?"

"That's all. Perhaps I didn't tell it right."

"You didn't," said Brett. "But no matter."

We were all laughing.

"Ah, yes," said Mike. "I know now. It was a damn dull dinner, and I couldn't stick it, so I left. Later on in the evening I found the box in my pocket. What's this? I said. Medals? Bloody military medals? So I cut them all off their backing—you know, they put them on a strip—and gave them all around. Gave one to each girl. Form of souvenir. They thought I was hell's own shakes of a soldier. Give away medals in a night club. Dashing fellow."

There is an ample dose of rather bleak *joie de vivre* in this book. At will Ernest Hemingway can re-create the good flavor of days in the open air; he knows intimately the smell of early morning at San Sebastian, or the sensation of emptiness and wind that night brings into the mountain villages of the Basque country. He savors the taste and feel and smell of living with a sort of hard-boiled gusto. One must not, he seems to believe, qualify or analyze things good in themselves, like brook trout, *hors d'oeuvres*, cold spring water, coffee and buttered toast, or hard liquor.

Particularly liquor. The amount of beer, wine and brandy con-

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sumed in "The Sun Also Rises" runs, I should judge, to a higher average per page and per character than in any other fiction since Rabelais. And the conversation! Hemingway reveals what amounts to a special talent for drunken conversation, the logical illogicality of the inebriate, the earnest, disconnected stories that reveal so much of the drinker's own inner personality. Yet this subtle talent runs away with him at times. His dialogue sounds drunken almost always, even at moments when by my careful and envious arithmetic, his characters have surely not had time to get tanked up yet.

JESUS—MAN OF GENIUS

By J. MIDDLETON MURRY

"Only a man"—but not "only a man like me."

Upon the figure of the Christ John Middleton Murry has looked long; for him has been fulfilled the promise: "Look upon Him, till He look back on you again, for so He will." Yet this book is one that may conceivably trouble, though it should not offend the straitly orthodox, since he finds in Jesus every supreme quality save supernatural divinity.

So eminent a churchman as Dean Inge has acclaimed Dr. Murry's book, "A fine piece of work, a sort of *Ecce Homo* for our generation. It really sheds fresh light on the central figure of all history." On the other hand, so prominent a religious paper as the English Church Times has said of it, "Fantastic is indeed too mild a term for some of its imaginings . . . This book is unredeemed by any beauty of style or picturesque insight."

As a sensitive literary critic with pronounced mystical leanings, it was almost inevitable that Dr. Murry should, sooner or later, write of Jesus as he has here done; that is to say, as a man, but as a "man of genius"—his life the highest soaring of the human creative spirit.

But it would be a great mistake to assume that because he writes of Jesus as a man, he condescends to him, as Renan did, as a village *illumine*. Perhaps it is best to let Murry defend himself on this point. He is speaking of what he terms "the emptiness, even the sacrilege of some of the Higher Criticism." "From my own experience," he says, "I well understand, and heartily sympathize with, the simple Christian who cries 'they have taken away my Master and I know not where they have laid him.' I confess that not a little advanced criticism of the Gospel narratives repels me as a man and

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irritates me as a critic, by its assumption that Jesus was an ordinary kind of man. Criticism of this kind seems never to pause to think the obvious thought that if Jesus had been an ordinary kind of man, it would not now, 1,900 years after His death, be striving to prove that He was."

By the device of a rapid and fairly full paraphrase of the Gospel story Mr. Murry furnishes a spine for his somewhat disconnected and unsystematic commentary on the Christ. Like most of the synoptists, he accords Mark authority much beyond the other three Gospels, and he cannot regard the Gospel of John as in any sense historical. Theology is a subject of which he admittedly knows little; he considers that his "training as a literary critic might be the equivalent of the more specialized training of the professor of divinity." Perhaps he is right. Theologians play an exact and formal game, with checks and gambits as well recognized as those in chess. Unhampered by their tradition or tortuous erudition, Middleton Murry writes of Jesus in a manner likely to appeal to the man of ordinary cultivation, a little repelled by the fanatical zeal of Papini or the bumptious callousness of Bruce Barton.

Yet this is by no means a conventional interpretation. Mr. Murry accords Jesus a sense of humor on the somewhat dubious grounds that the names, "Sons of Thunder" for James and John, and "Rock" for Peter were given in jest. "Rock" he suggests, in Peter's case really means "Wobbler" and was given in prevision of the denial in the courtyard of the high priest.

Another suggestion made by this author, tentatively but with surprising plausibility, is that there was some secret understanding between Jesus and Judas. "Had Judas been simply a common traitor," says Mr. Murry, "why should he have chosen the precise moment that Jesus desired and His enemies would have avoided for his treachery? Why did he bend himself so faithfully to Jesus' purpose? . . . May it not be that when Jesus first spoke of the necessity of His betrayal on the road to Capernaum, and the disciples 'did not understand His saying and were afraid to ask Him,' one of them did understand and bowed himself to the necessity of

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his great master? His name has been darkened by Christian piety. How were men who could not understand Jesus' purpose to understand the nature of him who served it? And if this plea for Judas seems too strange for sufferance, let it be forgotten as the vagary of one man's imagination; but let it be remembered that Judas was more necessary to the great drama than any other of the Master's disciples."

It is, of course, quite improbable that any hypothesis, however fantastic, concerning Jesus of Nazareth can today be put forward as original. He has stood full in the glare of inquiry, adoration and even abomination for 1,900 years. The author of "Jesus—Man of Genius" is simply a rational and liberal thinker for whom the phrase "Jesus only a man" certainly does not mean "only a man like me." It is that distinction, faithfully maintained throughout, which sets his book well apart from all the lives of Jesus that "end on a note of sympathetic condescension: He did this, and it was very beautiful, but we understand better."

Obviously it may be hard for anyone belonging to an organized church to agree entirely with Mr. Murry's book. It is so purely a personal and individual interpretation that it would probably be difficult to find any reader, even one utterly unrestricted by a creed, who could agree with all of it. But the point that I wish emphatically to make is that it is scarcely possible to conceive an orthodoxy so sensitive and so irascible as to be offended by even the most daring of Mr. Murry's suppositions. For his book is, in the best sense of the word, reverent. It would indeed be a narrow and complacent Pharisee who would dare to say that this man has not loved the Christ. That granted, may not his many and diverse heterodoxies be accorded the charity that was found by the woman of Nain, whose sins, which were many, were forgiven because she loved much?

HEARTS OF HICKORY

By JOHN TROTWOOD MOORE

"When he lays his hand on a horse, he is always at his best."

To Andrew Jackson, the fighting Scotch-Irishman, the South-west's own pioneer President, is due the very considerable interest that this book seems likely to awaken. But, in spite of the author's obviously fine familiarity with his epoch, it is Mr. Moore's propensity for melodrama and mawkish sentimentality which is responsible for the disappointment that "Hearts of Hickory" causes. These qualities, together with a singularly loose and careless manner of using his mother tongue, spoil what well might have been a genuine artistic achievement.

It is surprising that the character of Andrew Jackson has been used so infrequently in fiction and drama. The simple reality of his stormy and picturesque career should make the tinsel swash-bucklers of Sabatini and such-like popular romancers shrink to the dimensions of a puppet show. This long-legged, red-haired Tennessean took a hand in fourteen duels, brawls and cutting affrays, drove the fierce red warriors of the Creek Nation headlong through their own swamps, and conquered in pitched battle before New Orleans, British troops that had been toughened in the Peninsular campaigns and had helped to overthrow Napoleon.

Moreover, Jackson's one love affair would seem to have been almost cut to pattern—by the most exacting moving picture standards. He loved and married Rachel Donelson before she was legally divorced from her husband, killed one man and silenced the others who dared speak against her, and cherished her tenderly all her life. Perhaps the fact that these lovers were not a pair of jazz-age dolls, but primitive, tough-fibered pioneers who found solace not only in their affections, but the one in broad oaths, the other in

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grim Old Testament piety, and both in an occasional cob-pipe of home-grown tobacco, has postponed recognition of the essential and exquisite nature of their relationship.

Mr. Moore's book contains too little of Jackson and too much of an apocryphal sugar-and-water hero, Philippe, Count Monpensier, a nephew of the Duke of Orleans. This fellow, a juvenile paragon almost on the G. A. Henty pattern, had been romantically nurtured in the wilderness. He loves Tripping Toe, the niece of old Davy Crockett, the Indian fighter, and is loved by Sehoy, the sister of the great Creek chief, Red Cloud (Weatherford). These friendly Indians have all the impossible grandeur and nobility of Cooper's creations; the hostiles are treachery and fiendishness incarnate.

The gaudy and incessant fireworks in the plot of "Hearts of Hickory" can only be compared to the more lurid type of the three-reel western thrillers, or the Nick Carter and Deadwood Dick dime novels of an earlier day. In almost every chapter rifle shots ring out and "another redskin bites the dust." The action progresses in a perfect frenzy of plots and counter plots. Philippe, the "Little Duke," is always escaping by an eyelash, due either to his own superb courage and marksmanship or the similar qualities of one of his lady loves.

Against these faults must be set occasional vivid and delightful pictures of frontier life, possible only for an author deeply versed in the period. Such are the homecoming of the Tennessee troops at the end of the Creek War, the "treat" at Davy Crockett's cabin, and, above all, the scene of the horse race at Clover Bottom when Philippe rode a victory over "Monkey Simon," the dwarf negro jockey whose triumphs on the track are part of Tennessee's history. When he lays his hand on a horse John Trotwood Moore is always at his best. The famous horse race in his "Bishop of Cottontown," an earlier novel, is unforgettable, and this race on General Jackson's track is only a little less good. All his descriptions of Jackson's spacious, generous manner of life have the feel of the past in them. One simple chapter on "A Day at the Hermitage" is perhaps the best thing in the novel.

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Since in a previous paragraph Mr. Moore is accused of marked carelessness in his use of English, fairness demands that one submit examples. Such expressions as "speaking defamatory of Rachel Jackson" and "writing like a Scotch dominie would talk to an unruly school boy" are, to say the least, unusual in precise writing. However, to emphasize such flaws is a picayune business. Only one wishes that Mr. Moore would write another book, omitting fictitious French dukes, genteel savages and other stock properties of melodrama. Let him stick to the picturesque life which he as "director of libraries, archives and history of the state of Tennessee" knows so well.

Let us have more of Andrew Jackson's racing stables, where a game chicken's nest hung over the stall of every thoroughbred, more of the pioneer dances at "Mustering Out" time, when fiddles "in one whine struck up the jig tune 'Billy in the Low Grounds'." Give us more of the verve and gusto of the old "half horse, half alligator men," and more of the patient toil of the pioneer women, Mr. Moore. Don't omit the dirt and the sweat, the snuff-dipping, hard drinking and cruelty! "Beethoven-like flowers" we can dispense with; let us have Davy Crockett again, who always wanted "more air an' more elbow room an' fewer fools to fool."

DARK LAUGHTER

By SHERWOOD ANDERSON

"Would be better for more niggers and less neo-expressionism."

THE LONELY RIVER

"The great river, lonely and empty now, was, in some queer way, like a lost river. It had come to represent the lost youth of Middle America perhaps. Song, laughter, profanity, the smell of goods, dancing niggers—life everywhere! Great gaudy boats on a river, lumber rafts floating down, voices across the silent nights, song, an empire unloading its wealth on the face of the waters of a river! When the Civil War came on, the middle West got up and fought like the old Harry because it didn't want its river taken away. In its youth the middle West had breathed with the breathing of a river. . . . Big river, silent now. Creeping slowly down past mud banks, miserable little towns, the river as powerful as ever, strange as ever, but silent now, forgotten, neglected. A few tugs with strings of barges. No more gaudy boats, profanity, song, gamblers, excitement, life."

It is too bad that the man who has flashes of vision like that should have written the whole of "Dark Laughter." Sherwood Anderson is a poet, albeit a raucous one; a dreamer, though his visions are misty and vague; above all he is a seeker, a searcher for something, but never does he know quite for what. Men here in the Middle West can feel the poetry in the passage above; Anderson is one of us, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. But "Dark Laughter" as a whole is alien; it is a sordid farce, alight sometimes with strange moments of beauty and insight.

The actual plot is commonplace enough. A young Chicago newspaper man deserts his silly wife, also a scribbler of sorts, wanders down the Mississippi and up again to his childhood home, the small

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Indiana town of Old Harbor. Here he goes to work under an assumed name as an unskilled laborer in a wheel factory. Almost without effort he accomplishes the dream of every disgruntled coolie, a love affair with his boss's wife. The spoiled, neurotic Aline Gray proves anything but a difficult conquest. While the impotent "Babbitt" whom she has married parades in patriotic celebrations and plans with high-power advertising men to double his factory's output, Mr. Anderson's stealthy and emancipated hero gets in his deadly work.

Beneath the whole tale lies the idea that it is only in the elementary instincts and in skilled labor with one's hands that truth lies. "Sponge" Martin, a vigorous old wheel painter, and his admirable wife who "got drunk with him sometimes on paydays" and who was "as tough as a fox terrier," are presented as brave examples of a philosophic acceptance of the realities. The conception lends itself all too readily to burlesque, but Anderson really does savor a certain barbarous beauty in the life of the primitive tough-grained old pair. He writes:

"They would be lying there on the sawdust pile, Sponge Martin and his wife, a little lit up, the fire blazing between them and the river, the cat-fish lines out, the air filled with smells, the soft fishy river smell, smells of blossoms, smells of things growing. It might be there would be a moon hanging over them. . . . Lovers lying on an old sawdust pile under a summer moon on the banks of the Ohio."

Which is all well enough in its way. But Bruce Dudley, "Dark Laughter's" hero, presumably a normally civilized and literate American, apparently can gain nothing from his self-conscious and atavistic quest of primitivism save a certain nonchalance in adultery and a keen satisfaction in doing nothing, or at least as little as possible. In the end, for all his posturing, he amounts to little more than a tedious and petty scamp.

To readers who make a cult of Anderson, this, no doubt, is outright blasphemy. In extenuation may it be said that I regard certain of his short stories as among the most beautiful in contemporary

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American letters, and consider his recent "Story Teller's Story" to be a superlatively charming and honest autobiography. Anderson's outlook is an austere one; he sees men as helpless puppets, whipped to and fro by lusts and fears. Spinal rigidity in any of his characters would seem shockingly unnatural. His is a point of view, tenable, shared by many artists, and though slightly constricting, worthy of respect. But in "Dark Laughter" the irony and pity which should redeem it and sweeten its bitterness are lacking.

Although simple, primitive types in this novel, as in all his work, are masterfully portrayed, the author is far less successful with his sophisticated characters. They are displayed only too obviously without much knowledge of their background. When Sherwood Anderson attempts to write of the generation which left college to go to war, he is as much out of depth as Scott Fitzgerald would be wandering in the back streets of Winesburg, O. Anderson has little to gain from the influence of James Joyce (very apparent in this volume) or from the patter of the expatriate art crowd on the left bank of the Seine. The wide skies and broad rivers of the prairie country are his heritage. "Dark Laughter" would be the better for more niggers and less neo-expressionism.

As social commentary also the book is negligible. Anderson stacks the cards too patently against the established order. Weak men may, no doubt, succeed in business; but that as futile a fellow as Fred Gray could maintain and build up a large factory is preposterous. His marbles would be taken away from him with speed and dispatch.

When all this has been said, there remains Anderson's ponderous sincerity. He gropes, he fumbles, he seems to pick up his phrases with heavy, clumsy fingers, but honesty, a haunting sense of poetry, and an intense love of beauty have made him a craftsman to be reckoned with. A recent writer in the London "Nation and Athenaeum" speaks of his constant questioning of everything in a "Middle-West Goethean way." But in the pages of "Dark Laughter" there is little evidence of progress in his search for the eternal verities.

THE SPIRIT OF THE HIVE

By DALLAS LORE SHARP

*To see a world in a Grain of Sand,
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
And Eternity in an hour.*

—WILLIAM BLAKE.

Time and again the bees have been proved guardians of some of nature's profoundest mysteries. Dr. Dallas Lore Sharp, by profession a teacher of English in Boston University, by avocation a bee-keeper and literary naturalist, writes of his well-beloved charges thoughtfully and charmingly; though he pretends to little originality either of research or of commentary. Books on bees may be roughly divided into three classes: genuine scientific studies, of which old Huber's are the arch type, treatises on practical apiculture, and, lastly, a class of books which, for want of a better name, might be termed philosophical interpretations of the bee. Dr. Sharp's volume falls into this third division; like his illustrious predecessor, Maeterlinck, he tells the tale of the hive in terms of its political and social aspects, not omitting many an implied or overt comparison with man's less perfect if more flexible institutions.

How instinctively man has always turned to the bees for parables and fables! There is the fourth book of Virgil's *Georgics*, for instance. Virgil knew bees: "Tantus amor florum et generandi gloria mellis" is accurate enough, but the mythological errors in which he abounds are really no more wonderful than the magical truths which, in the intervening years, patient observation has deciphered. Old Bernard de Mandeville, in his "Fable of the Bees," used the hive rather unscrupulously to demonstrate his own paradoxical the-

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ories of the non-existence of virtue and the usefulness of vice. Space forbids further examples—the essence of the matter is that in the study of the bees, as in love, according to the French proverb, “One finds there what one brings to it.”

Professor Sharp, with his reverent and kindly enthusiasm, his exuberant love of the countryside, has found so much more than mere honey in his hives that he fairly bubbles over with a desire to share with other men his apiarian delights. Therein lies his book’s charm. Often his writing has a pungent, homespun quality that recalls John Burroughs. His book is not only the record of his bees, but a chronicle of the seasons in the meadows and woods about his home at Hingham—Hingham on Massachusetts Bay—where sweet airs from the apple orchards mingle with the salt tang of the sea. That indigenous Yankee flavor in his phrases is like the fruits from Hingham’s orchards or the succulent clams from the famous North River flats.

But one must admit that, as far as the bees are concerned, Dr. Sharp covers much the same ground as does Maeterlinck in his “*Life of the Bee*,” and does not cover it so well. Even his title would seem to have been coined by the great Belgian. Compare the manner in which the two men write of the mystery of the hexagonal cell. How much of its mathematical magic does the American neglect in a seeming attempt to be colloquial and sprightly!

Perhaps Dr. Sharp’s best chapter is the one on “*The Swarm*.” The mad and incalculable hegira from the old hive made by the queen and a major part of the working force is still an enigma to the naturalist and a vexing and expensive problem to the professional apiarist. Dr. Sharp offers what, to one reader at least, appears an original and plausible explanation of this phenomenon.

“*The swarm*,” he thinks, “may be a manifestation of thwarted nature, the collective bridal-flight of this unsexed social organism we call the colony, where the individual has lost not only sex but self, till the will and the instincts, along with the vital bodily organs, are socialized, fused by the heat of the whole into a group-will and instinct, the very flame of desire but ashes smoldering in the heart

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of the colony to burst for a brief moment into the roaring fire of the swarm."

As Dr. Sharp points out, the hive is the ultimate development, the "*reductio ad absurdum*," according to advocates of individualism, of the principles of socialism. For the sake of the hive no bee may ever live a complete life; the drone is slaughtered, the sterile worker thwarted of all mating and maternal experience, and even the queen sacrifices freedom and mobility for her great task of race propagation. Must the state of the future, to be enduring, demand such sacrifices from its individual members? Or is, perhaps, the lowly *Prosopis*, most primitive in the evolutionary scale of all the bee family, really in the better way since she at least is "whole and mated and a mother, the progenitor of her race, however solitary?"

Dr. Sharp is much too wise a man to attempt to answer such questions. He has written his book only in the hope that contemplation of a few of the intricate mysteries in the life of the bee may add delightfully to our own capacity for wonder.

THE LOVE NEST

By RING W. LARDNER

"A boy with a stick will sooner or later slash weeds."

Today Ring Lardner is perhaps the most difficult American writer to classify or fore-limit. With a modesty, delicious when contrasted against the pomposity of certain of his contemporaries, he refuses to take himself seriously. He smiles away all attempts to estimate him soberly: "Lay off," he seems to say, "or you'll make a high-brow out of me!" "The Love Nest" is his second collection of short stories of which some, at least, reveal an earnest, though unobtrusive, intent; they are a delight and a marvel in their consummate and spontaneous Americanism.

Granted by the gods an abundant spring of living humor, it is probably impossible for any man to avoid turning satirist. A boy with a stick will sooner or later slash weeds, and Ring Lardner's wit is too keen a weapon to be devoted entirely to burlesque tales and nonsense articles. But to write stories which satirize urbanely the very people who read them; that is an accomplishment to make old ironists like Swift and Voltaire nod approvingly. Sinclair Lewis in two or three novels has done something of the kind, but he has also made readers angry. Lardner, with a few short stories, cuts just as deep, but the anaesthesia is perfect; the victims feel no pain.

In this volume the "great man" of the title story, Lou Gregg, president of Modern Pictures, Inc., insists on taking Bartlett, who is to write him up for one of the success magazines, out to his home, his "love nest." As he says, with modest exactitude, he has a "house that looks like a hotel" and "plenty of extra pajamas, if you don't mind them silk." Bartlett accompanies him to a "white house that might have been mistaken for the Yale bowl" and into a living room "that was five laps to the mile and suggestive of an Atlantic City

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auction sale." There he meets Cynthia and the nestlings of the "love nest." The "great man" sounds off with smug and intolerable complacency in praise of his idyllic home life; Cynthia echoes him correctly enough.

Then Gregg hurries off to keep an engagement, leaving the journalist alone with his wife, who is to furnish more details of their enraptured domesticity. She does. She proceeds to punish a quart of Bourbon, and when it takes effect explains: "Say, I'm like this half the time, see? If I wasn't, I'd die!" The "applesauce" about the happy home and the contented wife goes very sour, indeed. It is a corrosive little tale, told with a drawl and a wry smile. There is some question whether the joke is on Gregg, his wife, or the great American public, which demands a sort of sugared, intimate publicity concerning all its favorites.

Few of the other stories in "The Love Nest" are quite so acrimonious. "Hair Cut" is a savage narrative of brutality and murder told by a barber who is so stupid that he thinks the whole thing a joke. "Zone of Quiet" is a splendid self-portrait of a jazz-age hospital nurse. But veteran Lardner enthusiasts are apt to think him at his best in his baseball sketches. Here there is only one of these, "Women"; the whole plot is nothing, a mere trick-frame on which to hang some matchless dialogue. A group of bench-warmers on a big league club "ride" each other lazily, while the hot, dusty innings in which they play so little part drag along. Someone observes a fair siren in the stands.

"I noticed her myself!" said Lefty. 'Damn cute! Too damn cute for a busher like you to get smoked up over!'

"Oh, I don't know!" said Young Jake. 'I didn't get along so bad with them dames down South.'

"Down South ain't here!" replied Lefty. 'Those dames in some of those swamps they lose their heads when they see a man with shoes on!'

Lardner started his career as a writer for a newspaper sports page and he has never lost the crisp, vivid style that makes that portion of the average paper the most spirited thing about it. Sometimes

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he is a careless, hurried workman, but he has scarcely written a line which could justly be called derivative. In the language of the day, he "does his own stuff"—and for most readers there is no humorist in America like him.

The cheap pun, the mere verbal wisecrack, he only uses as a means of characterizing the kind of fool who thinks them funny. Hypocrites, four-flushers and bluffers he can scent a long way off and he can smoke a pretentious cheap-skate out of his lair with a sentence. But his great gift is for the nuances of vernacular. A small town barber and a professional ball player may both be slangy and ungrammatical, but they use different argots. Ring Lardner knows both tongues; he is a polyglot of illiteracy. Dialects in America are mushroom growths. The idiom of Hardy's peasants or of Kipling's troopers has had centuries to develop and crystallize, but the lingo of the movie lots was born yesterday. These stories in "The Love Nest" are as contemporary as tonight's paper; they are immeasurably more artistic than nine-tenths of what parades behind the banners of modern aestheticism.

THE MAUVE DECADE

By THOMAS BEER

*"The gods of respectability wore with a grimace a few
gaudy ribbons."*

To find a pattern for the chaotic disquietude that was America's at the end of the nineteenth century is a task for Heracles. Thomas Beer takes his formula from Whistler—"Mauve? Mauve is just pink trying to be purple"—and he sees the period as one in which America's sempiternal gods of respectability and progress wore with a grimace a few gaudy ribbons of the ambiguous color.

Admittedly decadence and dilettante aestheticism were never more than surface adornments. In those years, too, American womanhood definitely assumed an attitude of godlike patronage of the universe; the West evolved a social self-consciousness, and the Irish, in spite of (or was it because of?) a still stoutly maintained racial and religious integrity, played a primary role in the formation of new laws and customs.

All these things are chronicled by Mr. Beer in his own elliptical and almost slyly colorful fashion. The technique which Lytton Strachey has used for individuals, Beer here employs on an epoch. It entails a crafty and gentle irony, and the somewhat specious implication that exceptional incidents and characteristics are quite ordinary and quite typical of your subject.

However, the method does make for amusing and piquant reading. Perhaps with more sobriety and less accent on the high-lights a better history of manners in America at the close of the century might be written; certainly fewer people would read it. And no one would willingly sacrifice much to retain bright pigment like that in the following sketch of certain western women:

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"There were women stately as great cows, and grammarless, before whose eyes the legend of the West had been erected. They had borne children on jolting floors of wagons, washed clothes that stunk from a week in oiled saddles, and had piled salt on wounds in brown flesh ripped by bullets. They knew well just what happened when some drover's wife came from the East and a squaw vanished, richer, to her tribe, leaving complimentary bronze offspring on the porch. These coarse memories gave them a drowsy smile that roused and glowed when they rocked in deep verandas among old men—— They were likely to swear terribly if the champagne came too warm to table, and Art, for them, was just a lacquered bowl to be filled with litchi nuts for grandchildren or the gilded clock that so gently ticked out their time in a son's house beside the rocks at Monterey. Perhaps the unforgotten kindness of their hands may raise them up a chronicler, else they are lost who were not ladies."

No synthesis of nineteenth century America could be even remotely fair which neglected the political high priests and augurs. Mark Hanna, the imperturbable realist; Croker, the epochal Tammany boss, who really possessed no color at all save his stripes, and Roosevelt, the dynamic symbol of the new century—they are all visible in "The Mauve Decade." Sometimes they are caught in unfamiliar and amusing attitudes. Mark Hanna, at the time of the great Pullman strike, "hammering a cigar to death in a club at Cleveland and saying angrily: "What in God's name does Pullman think he's doing?" William McKinley, sending his brother and three lawyers to call on the stubborn sovereign of intrenched interests. Richard Croker, embarrassed and tongue-tied beside a notorious beauty in her English cart. These are all diverting and singular pictures.

There is, moreover, a long gallery of literary men and capital anecdotes of some of them. Oscar Wilde appears as a "shabby, flabby face dusted with some yellow powder or dried ointment on its brownish stains." He drinks two bottles of white wine at an ingenuous American boy's expense, talking in "slow, elaborate sentences." "Some time during a third bottle a waiter dropped a friend's

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card at his elbow with a scribble on the pasteboard: 'That is Oscar Wilde.' Of course the young fellow blushed. Wilde, suddenly looking at his silver watch, exclaimed at the hour and rose. Then his theatrical habit overcame him. He bowed and said: 'I remove the embarrassment,' which wasn't quite civil after two bottles, but may be excused as Art."

Beer's manner gets all there is from a story like that. But there is another and better one of Wilde to come. On a subsequent meeting this boy (a Mr. Amos Armstrong apparently) waited vainly for a sparkle of words, something about something being more beautiful than the Seven Deadly Sins. At last Wilde stopped abruptly and asked: "Was there not a spring in the state of—of Arkansas, very well recommended for rheumatism?" Mr. Armstrong had heard of Hot Springs. Yes, that was the name. Wilde said something vague about fleeing like a wounded hart into Arkansas, and was silent.

A chronicler venturing back into the America of the "naughty '90's" must always gasp with amazement at the number of topics, situations and human organs which were on the *index expurgatorius*. One critic even reproached Irving Bacheller for "making mention of a man's navel." This provoked from old Mark Twain the drowsy question, "Haven't you got one?" Mr. Beer concludes inimitably: "There were young boys in the room and the critic evaded a vulgar admission by changing the subject."

The '90's tried to keep art in chaste leading strings; but surely a survey of the present-day crop of novels and plays is convincing proof that we have heartily repented of their folly. They endured what in retrospect appears to be an almost insufferable amount of political corruption and misgovernment, but perhaps it may be well to wait until 1956 to congratulate ourselves on our own spotlessness in this respect. Some of their leading figures have shrunk considerably with the years: Henry George, Thomas Bailey Aldrich and Frances Willard, to cite incongruous examples. In those days a hundred geniuses were hailed extravagantly; of their names (to paraphrase Landor, who, Mr. Beer says, is too often imitated with-

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out credit) the echo has grown very faint at last. But will it be otherwise with the prodigies of today?

Whatever their repressions and censorships, the '90's were extravagantly alive. Cakes and ale abounded and ginger was even then adequately hot in the mouth. There is an old French proverb purporting, "The more change, the more sameness," and an unbiased comparison of Mr. Beer's purplish period with our own piebald epoch would probably not reveal them as extravagantly dissimilar.

THE WHOLE STORY

By ELIZABETH BIBESCO

"Life is a cage at best—love belongs to the happy."

"So many things are emotion carriers—unexpected, absurd things." This phrase from an earlier book of the Princess Bibesco's has in it something of the secret of her art which depends so much on her exquisite awareness of the significance of trifles. Her plots are always fragile, tenuous things, brittle as spun glass. Her characters, like cosseted peacocks, live in such delightful unawareness of all the muddy dreariness of life that they would be exasperating if they were not, one remembers, the creatures of the daughter of an English prime minister and earl, marionettes confected by the wife of a Roumanian royal prince and ambassador. Life is a cage at best; and gilded cages are all that Elizabeth Bibesco could know. For her to write of poverty or stunted lives would be sheer affectation.

But for her to write of people so wholly "smart," in the fullest sense of the perverted adjective, and to make them warm, human, lovable and not a little pathetic, is a fact. She could bring it off because of their wealth, their position, their pampered physical perfections, are simply not the point for her. They are merely incidental characteristics of the kind of people she knows. What matters are the things that hurt them, the things that make them happy. Chief of these is love, "love," which, as the title and motif of the last short story in this volume maintains, "belongs to the happy."

Yet it is not happy lovers of whom she writes most sympathetically. Gallant old Mlle. De la Peronniere, who put all her heart into letters to her gilded nephew in Paris, who never even read them; who created, unbeknown to Achille, "with his cane and monocle, his absurdity and his elegance, his wit and his rubbish," an Homeric legend of provincial life—mademoiselle was not happy.

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But her letters were masterpieces. Forty years later her nephew's entry in the Biographical Dictionary Larousse described him as the recipient of the world-famous Peronniere letters; also, incidentally, as the author of several volumes of short stories and verse "which are no longer read."

Sometimes in these stories one comes across quick flashes of characterizations which are delightfully revealing. That prodigious nephew, Achille, "with his ascetic dedication to a pose," would say, "my poor cousin had so much heart; and he said 'heart' in the same tone of voice with which he might have said 'heart disease.'" Or there is Lady Tetbury, who "didn't like women and profoundly distrusted intimacy. All of her daughter's tender divinations gave her a feeling rather of being found out than of being understood." Or the eager lover in "The Red Cushion" (all her eager lovers seem to me to be the same fellow), who "didn't want her voice on the telephone to nibble a little bit out of the shock of his joy at seeing her."

Occasionally there are naive illuminations of the commonplace reminiscent of the Russians:

"Isn't it funny," she said, "that to ourselves our faces don't exist—they are simply things we look at in a glass, that we cover with powder, that we surmount with a hat? And to you my face is me—this unknown thing that I take about with me is what you think of me by."

Much is here of Henry James, something of Chekov and a haunting quintessence of femininity that makes one wonder why women are ever so silly as to try to write like men. People who delight in Katherine Mansfield's stories may savor these. There is less skill here, less infinite pains, less honesty perhaps; but there is certainly the same exquisitely attuned response to overtones and almost inaudible minors in the jangling clamor of existence.

Stories like Elizabeth Bibesco's are rare and unsubstantial things. Fragile and slight as they are, they are not to be picked over or clumsily anatomized. A mind and a heart graceful, fastidious and civilized have gone into their making. They reflect a phase of our

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culture which, in these days of prosperous bounce and brag, one could wish to see perpetuated.

May some future connoisseur of periods, like Philip Guedalla or Lytton Strachey, seeking to capture early twentieth century atmosphere, come on this book along with "Babbitt," "The Sheik," "Masterson" and such-like novels whose immense sales today will make them less rare finds at future old-book stalls. May this talented antiquarian regard "The Whole Story" as something more than a charming anachronism. May it persuade him that our age, too, like the regency, the world of Louis the Sun King, and the Second Empire, could boast ladies with minds of exquisite sensibility, delicately responsive to all the pathos and enchantment of their gay and gaudy world.

STRAWS AND PRAYER BOOKS

By JAMES BRANCH CABELL

"He is an artist—life's half-frightened playboy."

In "Straws and Prayer Books" Mr. Cabell has discarded his masquerade. It is disconcerting to behold, clad in a sober business suit, this figure for whom long custom has made us feel armor, plumed hats, fiery shirts and all the habiliments of medieval fantasy to be appropriate. In this volume, intended as an epilogue to the biography of Don Manuel of Poictesme (all Mr. Cabell's books purport to be chapters in the biography of Manuel and his descendants), he has set down in direct fashion certain ideas implicit in all the earlier volumes.

He is a thoughtful man, this gentle, sardonic Virginian, always a bit aloof from current literary schools and cliques, always refreshingly free from *cliches*, however contemporary. He has written himself out in some fifteen volumes, passionately, sincerely, with never an eye toward his sales totals. He is an artist, "life's half-frightened playboy," as he himself defines the term.

But truly there is little timidity evident in Poictesme, the tinsel microcosm he has created for his effrontuous heroes, his Jugens and Don Manuels, to wander about in. There is much sound erudition there; if Mr. Cabell manufactures legend and quotes sonorous-sounding authorities for whose works you will search vainly in the largest of libraries, it is not because he lacks intimate acquaintance with a vast store of medieval lore and chronicle. Yet Poictesme remains but a land of two dimensions, a grotesque pageant in curious tapestry.

Of Cabell's personal preferences in matters literary "Straws and Prayer Books" offers information. It evinces an unrestrained admiration for Joseph Hergesheimer, a more conditioned liking for

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George Moore, and an aversion for such dissimilar masters as Jane Austen, George Borrow, Miguel de Cervantes, Henry James, Herman Melville, George Meredith, Friedrich Nietzsche, Thomas Love Peacock, Francois Rabelais and Walt Whitman.

Even more informative is the amusing interview with the author of "The Eagle's Shadow," in other words, Mr. Cabell today holding converse with Mr. ——— "to write perfectly of beautiful happenings." More than most exalted ambitions this has been realized. Few would dispute that Mr. Cabell does at times write beautifully. In this volume are retold, as apt illustrations of points in his argument, two fables in the old accustomed manner. "The Thin Queen of Elfhome" and "The Delta of Radegonde." How pleasant it is to encounter again their whimsical and delicately cadenced prose! How subtly Mr. Cabell creates his overtones of excellent sadness!

No artist of the present day has been more misinterpreted. As the author of "Jurgen" he will long remain suspect, chiefly among those who have never read that and seldom any other of his books. A wistful, mocking figure, one remembers Mr. Cabell, as in the gesture with which he closes this epilogue. "Very lightly," he says, "I pass my fingertips across these fifteen book backs; and touch in this small gesture, so didactically small, the whole of that to which, for good or ill, I have amounted. And thereafter (with a continuing sense of wholesome allegory) I go quietly to bed."

Still, one has the comfortable conviction that this talented gentleman, yet a comparatively young man, will arise in good time after satisfactory slumber and produce more books of a very readable and colorful character. As during that pensive moment when the final curtain falls on an actor in a good part, one holds to the thought that he will be at it again tomorrow night.

THE WIND AND THE RAIN

By THOMAS BURKE

*"Black man, white man, brown man, yellow man,
Pennyfields and Poplar and Chinatown for me."*

Thomas Burke has won a definite place as the romantic interpreter of London's East End and, particularly, of Limehouse and Poplar and all the dingy, polyglot dockyard districts. Over these he has managed to throw a misty, exotic charm, something of a conjurer's trick, as anyone who has looked even casually upon those dreary wastes of blind-front warehouses and smoke-stained stone railway arches will bear witness. Now, in "The Wind and the Rain" he gives us the story of his own boyhood and youth, a Cockney romance in an atmosphere sometimes suggestive of Dickens.

For Burke in writing of himself has avoided the high-pitched melodrama which marred or made, according to one's taste, so many of his earlier stories. He tells simply of a little boy who lived with his old uncle in a tiny room in Poplar and visited on gala occasions an inner sanctuary called "The Wheelhouse," the back room of "The Barge Aground." Here was life and reality, but over on the causeway in a shop filled with the gaudy litter of the East abode mystery and glamour in the person of his friend Quong Lee. Rather inexplicably this elderly Chinaman seems to have always been for Burke a symbol of outlandish wonder, of escape from the prosaic world of everyday. The ancient Port of London was a fascinating, if perilous, nursery for an imaginative child. Strange-scented cargoes and seamen from all the corners of the world arrived in these deep-laden ships whose sirens haunted the night and whose searchlights streaked patterns in the London fog.

Burke is in his happiest vein when writing of the sights and sounds of Poplar. He loves its "rich company and kind streets and laughter,

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and ships and water. These things—a work of art and a work of Nature—carry beauty and the feeling of adventure wherever they go. They lend color to the people who have to do with them; and a wet day or a gray twilight is less troublous to the soul if brown sails, red funnels and great spars break up its melancholy.”

Through the misdirected kindness of his uncle’s employer, or, as Burke knew her, the Lady of the Big House in Greenwich, the boy at ten years of age found himself exiled from his beloved streets and confined in the strict orphanage school at Hardcress. For him this worthy if somewhat soulless institution was a little Hell-on-Earth, but he is honest enough to admit that its directors were well-intentioned, and the experience supplied him with materials for some of the most interesting chapters in the present volume. That little children left to play in dirty streets are happier than when herded into sanitary and highly organized institutions is a prime article in Burke’s creed. This tale of his Hardcress days does much to explain and justify it. Indeed he has ever been a stout advocate of leaving the poor alone, of sparing them all charity of the visiting curate or Oxford slumming expedition type.

When he emerged at last from the bleak walls of the orphanage, it was into a world harsh and sinister, full of only partially understood evil; but for him all was tolerable because he was free. He worked for some months as boot boy in a very questionable hotel in Caledonian road before he became one of the army of ill-paid clerks that each morning swarmed across London bridge into the dark old city, there to sit on high stools before ancient ledgers from nine until seven.

These were crucial years and came near to breaking his whimsical, insurgent spirit. He seems to have been always hungry and lonely; he discovered the world of books, but found no one to guide him there or even to share with him these new delights. One is amazed that he stayed four years in the city, but petty clerkships in London are not to be had for the asking. Even a boy of Burke’s vagrant temperament clings to his place because it is so extremely unlikely that he will get another.

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When "a ruler that missed a clerk's head went through a ground glass panel into the board room" young Burke was out of a job at last. In three weeks he was sleeping in a doss house with stranded sailors, tramps and all the flotsam and jetsam of London's bleak east coast. His real low water mark he reached, however, on a night's carouse with a chance met sailor. This brought him finally into the mysterious upper room of Quong Lee's shop, where the merchant was running an opium den.

Somewhere about here the author apparently has foreshortened his narrative by a succession of coincidences. The next morning he encountered an old Hardcress chum who is now a flashy music hall performer, and his fortunes commenced a swift and steady ascent. Through Crosgrave he obtained entry into a new world. His starved pleasure-loving nature blossomed in the congenial, open-handed atmosphere of the halls. His ready knack for turning out programs, billboards and music hall patter brought him an easy livelihood and afforded him leisure for the more serious writing which had become his heart's goal.

Odd items of Burke's tenets of literary craftsmanship are scattered through these pages; they are interesting as explaining both his strength and his weakness. Intensely romantic, he lacks the depth of vision or even the desire to penetrate below surfaces which real artistic endeavor entails. He would entertain and create a glamour—very often he succeeds—but one wishes that his gift for occasionally very lyric prose might serve a more assured purpose.

Always he has been the faithful troubadour of the gray old London of his childhood. Years ago he caught in verse what is perhaps the essence of the charm for him of the West India Dock road:

Black man, white man, brown man, yellow man!

Pennyfields and Poplar and Chinatown for me!

Stately moving cutthroats and many colored mysteries;

Never were such lusty things for London days to see.

On the evil twilight, rose and star and silver,

Steals a song that long ago in Singapore they sang;

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Fragrant of spices, of incense and opium,
Cinnamon and aconite, the betel and the bhang.

Three miles straight lies lily-clad Belgravia,
Thin-lipped ladies and padded men and pale;
But here are turbaned princes and velvet-glancing gentlemen,
Tomtom and shark knife and salt-caked sail.

This, with minor variations, is still the burden of Burke's song. Though Limehouse appears tame enough when you visit it, he can still evoke you a lusty thrill therefrom, and surely his magic is at least as authentic as that of our own "Wild Western" fictionists.

THE CREATIVE SPIRIT

By ROLLO WALTER BROWN

No great thing is created suddenly, any more than a bunch of grapes or a fig. If you tell me that you desire a fig, I answer you that there must be time. Let it first blossom, then bear fruit, then ripen.—EPICTETUS.

In America we have managed to expedite the processes of Nature in so many directions that it may even be possible to speed up the creative spirit of the race. Whether or not a book with the avowed purpose of "fostering creative-mindedness" may really accomplish such a feat is problematical. The human spirit is still an equation with too many unknowns for facile expansion. However, Rollo Brown is obviously as well aware as the next man of the intractability of human material, and his book may be accepted simply as a thoughtful and ingenious appraisal of America's creative potentialities.

In seven chapters he inquires into the relation of the creative spirit and such disparate factors as the church, conduct, education, the industrial scheme, science and art. He is no complacent optimist of the "uplift and inspiration" type; he faces the issues shrewdly enough and his temperate strictures cut into the heart of many contemporary shams. If these were the first dissections of the kind encountered they might seem devastating; but, of late, society's imperfections have been dynamited so frequently by expert "hard-rock men" like Wallas, Lippman, Dewey, Robinson, *et al*, that even naturally impressionable readers become shock proof.

Sometimes, however, Mr. Brown approaches a problem from an unusual angle. His chapter on the church, for instance, is full of barbed-wire and well protected gun emplacements. Let any clergyman, particularly one of the "snappy, up-to-the minute" variety,

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storm through it at his peril. But it is written by a self-avowed church member, a warm believer in the religious principles. His point of view seems actually to sharpen the knife, but it also anaesthetizes it.

Occasionally his incisions seem really aidful, as when he says in reference to the reciprocal needs of art and the church, "If there is one quality which art now needs, and always needs, it is a strong dash of grave hopefulness to save it from being wholly whimsical, wholly distraught, or wholly degraded." Or again, a little later: "But the church will probably be able always to contribute most to the encouragement of the artistic creators by fulfilling in a very high degree its functions of looking at the world as the idealist sees it."

The practitioners of science and of art, those two great outlets for the creative spirit, come in for sundry well-aimed shafts of urbane condemnation. He accuses the scientists of inducing in the population at large "a spiritual myopia and consequently a feeling of life's futility." He quotes with approval George Sartom's declaration that "The man of science is great to the extent of his devotion not only to truth but to other men."

In the field of art Mr. Brown finds the courses in practical play construction of Prof. George Baker (late of 47 Workshop, Harvard), and the inspiring leisure of the MacDowell colony wholly admirable as stimuli for the "Creative Spirit." But he maintains that the shortcomings of American art are largely due just now, on the part of the performers, to a certain "cult of degradation" (one almost hears here the applause of such critics as Prof. Stuart Sherman), and, on the part of the public, to "museum-mindedness." Mr. Brown makes his points aptly and with great good humor.

Perhaps his book's strongest appeal to the ordinary reader will lie in the fact that he is not a narrow specialist. "Who's Who" fails to reveal for him anything more constricting than an English lectureship at Harvard. Though Mr. Brown himself would probably deny his book any pretensions to profundity, it contains flashes of insight that light up angles in the great American maze. Optimism

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with us today is undoubtedly in bad repute; it too often appears a poor, synthetic thing, soggy in an atmosphere of commercialized hokum. But reading "The Creative Spirit" affords a momentary relief: here one listens to a suave and astute skeptic who has somehow managed to keep dry the powder of his idealism.

THE HOUNDS OF SPRING

By SYLVIA THOMPSON

"Romance is the ultimate reality of life."

Perhaps it may not seem fair to preface all remarks concerning this novel by the bald statement that the author is only twenty-three years old. However, "The Hounds of Spring" is palpably conditioned, for better or worse, by youth. Sylvia Thompson belongs to the generation who can begin to look at the war through the other end of the telescope. That cataclysm which marked a climax in the lives of most writers now living, and the scarcely less disastrous peace which has followed it, must wear a different aspect for one who entered the decade 1914-1924 at the age of eleven. Aside from the very real merits of her story, Sylvia Thompson becomes significant as one of the first serious and articulate spirits for whom these troublous times may merely appear as "old, unhappy, far-off things, and battles long ago."

In spite of this, it must be confessed that an outline of the plot of "The Hounds of Spring" might lead one to suspect that "The Dogs of War" would be an equally appropriate title. Its essential motive is the tragic searing of spirit suffered by the young people who have been brought up on Browning's "God's in His heaven, all's right with the world." But Miss Thompson looks back upon the war and those mellow and halcyon days just preceding it with a youthfully disillusioned and impartial eye; sometimes she has almost the manner of a psychological antiquary. How queer people like the Renners seem to her, living out their quiet, mannerly, country-house existences, accepting peace and plenty as their right, like Keats' bees, "until they think warm days will never cease."

When Zina Renner's fiance, Colin, was reported "missing, believed killed," she lacked the bravery to wait and hope alone. Miss

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Thompson has all her age's fine scorn for second bests of any kind, and her analysis of Zina's weakness in marrying a man she could not love is full of trenchant observation and somewhat pitiless understanding. To bring Colin back alive after several years' loss of memory through shell shock is of course a scarcely plausible device, but it motivates the book and brings Zina's sin of little faith dramatically upon her head.

Yet it is indeed excellently realistic that Zina herself should pay less dearly for her compromise with fate than those about her. Her naturalized Austrian father (a warm, delicately realized character), her mother, her husband, Barrett-Saunderson (a less well portrayed, Galsworthian "man of property"), and the son she has borne him, all have cause in their various degrees to regret Zina's lack of backbone. But Zina herself has no heart for remorse nor thought of sacrifice on the altar of duty. She turns to Colin when he comes back as easily and unscrupulously as a flower to the sun. For a little she maintains a certain outward pose of hesitation, but this is ruthlessly and quickly penetrated by her younger sister Wendy, who knows and tells Zina she is "not the kind that makes decisions in a splendid way. You just do what you want to do most."

The young girl is possibly the most interesting of all Miss Thompson's creations. She is so contemporary and so much in accord with the author's own ideas that one suspects an attempt at self-analysis. Wendy is hard and bright, a little lacking in glamorous charm, perhaps, but capable of fierce honesty, as when she says: "What's the good of being sentimental about loving and hating and right and wrong? They're much too real for that." There is very little of the traditional flapper about her; her life is poignantly real and earnest and she is almost pathetically anxious for herself and her generation "to try to straighten things out, and get at life keenly and rightly; to make for decency, and duty, and peace."

It is just this naive earnestness of heart that lifts "The Hounds of Spring" to something a little higher than precocious cleverness. The characters do deliver lectures to each other on such subjects as the political state of the world and Meredith's poetry without

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the least regard for the limits operative in actual conversation. It is not for nothing that the book is partially dedicated to "the mind of H. G. Wells"; one feels the influence of such novels as "The Research Magnificent" and "Joan and Peter" in many chapters.

One may read "The Hounds of Spring" for the story, which never flags; one may also read it as a sort of "tract for the times." Here is a young girl honestly and with considerable perspicacity looking at her world. If she finds in it cause for much complaint, the wisest of her elders have already pleaded guilty to most points of her arraignment. If, at the last, she seems to feel that romance is the ultimate reality of life—"she was conscious that among all her doubts and skepticisms she did at least believe in and could therefore fight for this one thing: the absolute rightness, above all other considerations, of people loving each other"—that only shows her to be not utterly dissimilar to the full-skirted, long-tressed generations of girls who have preceded her.

ESSAYS OF 1925

Edited by ODELL SHEPARD

*"Our best prose produced by fellows with a little battle-smoke
stinging their eyes."*

This admirable prose anthology, simply entitled "Essays of 1925"—not, mark you, "Best Essays" or "Prize Essays"—is a singularly happy example of the art of compilation. Professor Odell Shepard has so skillfully gathered this slender sheaf from the year's harvest of magazine articles and essays that the book takes on a sensible pattern and becomes indeed, as the compiler has hoped, "a sort of composite photograph." His own preface is by no means the least distinguished bit of writing in the volume, and he has caught exactly the impression left by his twenty-four contributors when he says that they suggest an America "still mildly sentimental, still idealistic, but disillusioned at last of many a fair, false dream that once seemed the solidest reality. They show us more disposed than we once were to laugh at our own absurdities, and more courageously determined to work out our destiny in the light of knowledge and reason."

For readers in this part of the country the article by Senator James A. Reed on "The Pestilence of Fanaticism" is of peculiar interest. Like Abou Ben Adhem, his name leads all the rest, not only in the table of contents, but also in the opinion of the reviewer, in power of trenchant hard-hitting and in concise and picturesque expression. Good may come even out of Nazareth, and the United States senate can still boast a member whose manner of argument allows of no more lost motion or misdirected energy than does a well-handled electric riveter. Senator Reed thinks our present-day reformers are a plague and an affliction. He loses no time shadow boxing, but leaps the ropes, in his first paragraph, fighting, and is

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still swinging hard with both hands when the bell rings in the last.

"Washington," he says, in a characteristic burst of excoriation, "has become the universal mecca of human freaks. To that city protagonists of vagaries gravitate by all known routes, some by election, some by appointment, and some by 'divine command.' The great majority, however, merely follow noses that itch for the business of others. There they bed and breed. They haunt the corridors of the public buildings, crowd into the offices of congressmen and insist upon displaying their fantastic and sometimes loathsome wares. Consumed by passion for experimentation, they regard the public corpus as a legitimate subject for ceaseless exploratory operations and clinical vivisection."

It is unquestionably true that Americans are growing restive at the continual encroachment of legislative control into the narrow field of individual liberty. Many of these articles echo this tendency. In the present volume Senator Reed appears as what in his own avocation is called a "keynoter." The other contributors, however much they may resent the standardization of modern education, deplore the transposition of matters mannerly into the domain of morals, or lament recent auguries of the birth of an intolerant and un-American fascism, cannot quite maintain, or even attain, Senator Reed's strident and vehement pitch.

Many of the questions of the day are here discussed in a tone of good-tempered, though usually somewhat prejudiced, inquiry. George A. Coe wonders whether youth is being adequately trained and inspired for the leadership which it must assume; Alexander Black suspects that the new school of artistic criticism, the "sublimated aesthetics" and "significant form" addicts, are really inhibiting rather than stimulating the normal individual's appreciation of art; and Fred Easton, a liberal and instinctively unorthodox Protestant clergyman, discusses a personal problem with wide general implications in a paper entitled "Shall I Remain in the Church?" It is all good, thought-provoking stuff. Quite rightly, Mr. Shepard has included some contributions that embody extreme views. Be thankful that he has; what could conceivably be duller than a col-

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lection of essays on contemporary problems by a group of confirmed "middle-of-the-roaders?"

But like all the best editors, he himself is not a propagandist. For instance, what Alphonse B. Miller has to say about "Jesus and His Biographers" may perhaps lacerate the sensibilities of certain pious and reverential readers. But let them continue, let them essay the next contribution. There they will meet the Rev. Gilbert B. Symons with his "Gentle Passion for Mending Things." There they will find a whimsical and delicately written homily, a bit of prose that fairly smells of old lavender and carries more than a suggestion of the benign tranquility of Izaak Walton or George Herbert.

It is to be hoped that "Essays of 1925" is only the first of an annual series. The volume at hand amply demonstrates that even in these days when anthologies prodigiously abound there is room for yet another. It would be difficult to overpraise Professor Shepard's editorial competence. Unquestionably he is right in feeling that at present the best American essays are not written in the vein of Addison, Charles Lamb and Hazlitt. He confesses, as who would not, a predilection for the less dogmatic style, "frequent oases of urbane and civilized laughter, little zones of leisure remote from the drum-fire of argument and the rattle of statistics." But just now our best prose seems to be produced by fellows with a little battle-smoke stinging their eyes. H. L. Mencken, with his "American Mercury," wrong-headed though he may sometimes be, has performed real service to American letters in helping to thaw our better magazines out of their attitude of icy New England insulation. Today the American essayist seems to derive, not from the mellow Elia nor from the genial authors of the Spectator Papers, but rather from doughty old intellectual pugilists like John Knox, who once gave to a small anti-feminist tract the amiable title, "First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women."

ROUGH JUSTICE

By C. E. MONTAGUE

*"Whoever fights, whoever falls,
Justice conquers evermore."*

I think C. E. Montague would like to believe those lines. The *motif*, ever recurrent in "Rough Justice," seems to be an attempt to reconcile the wrongs which he has seen with the beauty which he has conceived in his heart. The war found this author a sensitive, middle-aged man, a critical artist, "caviare to the general," perhaps, but with his soul well poised in a world which he found good. Although his age, his family, and his position in journalism all offered excuses by which the cup might have passed from him, he drank his war down neat, serving three years as a private in one of the early sportsmen's battalions. Several years ago, in "Disenchantment," he wrote what remains possibly the most poignant and beautiful book evoked directly by the war. Now, in "Rough Justice" he has tried to fit his knowledge of holocaust and horror into a conventional fictional pattern. That is a task beyond his powers.

"Rough Justice" leaves in the mind an impression of imperfectly fused elements. His sense of pre-war England, his school and university atmosphere and his hard-won knowledge of the civilian militant; all these are real enough, but they will not precipitate into his plot. The book is essentially a haphazard, conventional story, full of undissolved bits of unique and splendid artistry. Montague's mind has a profound richness and an unobtrusive *patine* that are probably unmatched by anyone writing novels in English today. Nevertheless, "Rough Justice," placed side by side with the plotless "Disenchantment" tends to demonstrate that fiction is not his game.

Perhaps he is too serious. The souls of all the simple, inarticulate

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men who died obscurely for England seem to haunt him. Like Macbeth, he cannot forget "those dead whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace." So, for his protagonist in "Rough Justice" he has conceived Auberon Garth, the almost incredible quintessence of English chivalry. Not clever—Montague is himself too keen a mind to have much respect for cleverness—but sound and clean and sensitive. He loves this fellow whom he has created, and he heaps on his head an almost impossible burden of perfections. Still he does make vivid and real for us a subtle fineness in all three Garths—Auberon, his father John and his foster-sister Molly. They are compounded of exquisite gentility; their quality is affectionately revealed by small things, by what John Milton phrased long ago as "those graceful acts, those thousand decencies that daily flow from all their thoughts and actions."

The childhood of Molly and Auberon in a tranquil old house on a tidal reach of the Thames is recounted in some detail. Montague knows how to make his children interesting, though hardly credible. Several subsequent chapters apparently have as their background his own time-mellowed remembrance of his school and university days. Then comes August, 1914, and Auberon Garth and all his gay, fantastic young Oxford friends find themselves thrown out of their Paradise almost abruptly. But Auberon, with his fine love for every one of the simple, natural things of life, took to soldiering easily. He "was not an easy Adam to afflict. Even the fiery sword at the gate was a curious novelty to him; the serpent himself had points; he was a grand beast of his kind." It was Victor Nevin, the voluble and elegant, whose patriotism, set to polished periods, had struck the note to which they had all responded that first warm evening in August; Victor it was who broke shamefully under the stress of actual hardship and combat.

Molly had thought she loved Victor; Auberon had admired him just this side of idolatry. His cowardice and deserter's death were hard blows to both of them. By an almost palpable effort, Montague closes "Rough Justice" on a hopeful note. Auberon takes Molly to wife; for a long time it has been obvious to any reader that he alone

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embodies enough perfection for her. At the end, "the two unconscious emblems of all that had saved England in war and had now to save her in peace stood enlaced."

Such a plot, of course, is pretty thin stuff. The virtue of the book is elsewhere; in the lift and swing of Montague's phrases, in his sanguine sophistication, and in the deft and subtle shading of a number of minor characters. This author is an idealistic ironist; truly an interesting and paradoxical combination. Claude Barbason and Colin March, two of the best vehicles for his satire, have been lifted bodily from an earlier short story called "Honors Easy."

It has been said here that C. E. Montague at times can write superbly. A statement like that should be supported by better evidence than a reviewer's bald and feeble asseveration. Watch him carving, with quick, sharp strokes, the face of a bloated hypocrite, a czar of the yellow press, whom he calls Roads:

"He was an obviously underbred person of forty or so, with too much flaccid flesh, and he cultivated a labored intensity of expression, like 'still, strong men' in weak movie plays; under his pasty skin the flabby facial muscles were industrially clenched; but through this screen any observant person . . . could see a flurried little soul crouching or shuffling about behind it."

And here again is a paragraph that carries a whole vanload of virtues; ripe wisdom, whimsically and colorfully expressed, deft phrasing and overtones of gentle, ironic pathos:

"It had struck five on the last afternoon before the world broke, and the sun was now going down on a number of things besides landscapes The old England, too, the one that was still feudal at heart, had come to her deathbed at last. Only six or seven hours now and all her ancient belfries, from Winchester up to Durham and Carlisle, would be tolling their twelve strokes apiece, for her passing. She died hard, the glorious old jade. A little wicked in her time, and now wizened, she lay handsome tonight, with the fine bones showing well through the skin that was turning to wax. At any rate, for what was left of that lustrous Tuesday in August, people would stay in the classes to which it had pleased God or some other

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authority to call them; cows would stand still to be milked; ale would be good at twopence a glass, and all the young men whom you liked would remain alive, with two arms to them each, and two legs, to employ in such tranquil pursuits as lawn tennis in sunny gardens over the shining waters of the Thames, if it were their blest portion—or else to stretch them on hot turf among roses.”

Unquestionably, C. E. Montague has written, once or twice, better things than “Rough Justice.” Perhaps he may do so again. In the meantime the small but intensely loyal body of readers who find him rarely and peculiarly sympathetic will presumably be duly grateful for the book at hand.

THE OUTLOOK FOR AMERICAN PROSE

By JOSEPH WARREN BEACH

"To care vitally for good writing is, at least, a harmless folly."

No one who is really concerned about the future of letters in America; no one for whom modern fiction is something more than a device to kill time on a railroad train, can afford to miss this book. To care vitally for good writing, to be sometimes troubled and sometimes lifted by the efforts of a few writers who seem really on the point of creating a fresh, indigenous literature here in America, is at worst a harmless folly. To anyone who indulges in it, "The Outlook for American Prose," by Professor Beach of Minnesota University, may be safely recommended. There is full value there in thought-provoking entertainment.

In his preface this author disclaims for the book any profound or sibylline gift of prophecy; "it is," he says, in part, "simply the complaint of a reader impatient of unlovely writing;" and, in part, "an expression of satisfaction with writing which is good." Style is the touchstone on which he tries a dozen modern writers. But it is one thing to award praise or blame with ample gesture, and quite another to expertly analyze and dismember a given man's style in such a way that one's own vaguely felt impulses to irritation or delight become logical and communicable hypotheses.

For Professor Beach, Sherwood Anderson and Waldo Frank on the one hand, and H. L. Mencken and James Branch Cabell on the other, represent manners of writing to which the artistic prose of the next generation may be much indebted. The first two owe less to the great traditional masters of English than do the second. They are, in one sense of the word, more original stylists. But Anderson and Frank have, as he claims, less expertness in their particular manner than have Mencken and Cabell.

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In recent autobiography, even in such dissimilar works as those of Henry Adams, Ludwig Lewisohn and Alfred Kreymborg, he finds marked stylistic merit. Theodore Dreiser puzzles him; the crude, unlovely English repels, yet the man's rich, humane wisdom, his patient, stubborn anxiety for the truth, make him a lonely and significant figure.

Unquestionably, the high points in "The Outlook for American Prose" are the chapters in which Professor Beach administers swift and violent castigation to such popular and aesthetically pretentious notables as Mr. Hergesheimer, Mr. Hutchinson and Mr. Swinerton. It may be reasonably objected that two of these worthies are not Americans at all, but for Professor Beach they illustrate excellently what he calls a misuse of "proud words" and a tendency to "saw the air;" in other words, they are arch examples of affectation and sentimental violence, so he spansks them and vicariously punishes a whole school of less important American writers who possess their faults without their merits.

To Hergesheimer he returns again and again with the paddle: the man is habitually incoherent and affected, fussy and often unintelligible. He quotes book and verse in proof of these charges: out of Joe's own mouth does he condemn him. Yet I am inclined to accept at face value the professor's protest that he is a devoted reader of Hergesheimer. How else could he know his books so well?

Certainly it is an odd array of culprits who here back up to the professorial switch. Who would have expected to find Gamaliel Bradford's chaste New England dignity so mishandled? Yet Professor Beach arraigns him for over-anxiety and fussiness, for "the clock-like recurrence of his formal transitional phrases." Even Prof. John Dewey, awesome savant of psychology, does not escape. He is frequently obscure and over-involved; he misuses quite ordinary words and sometimes so complicates simple thoughts that their deciphering entails unnecessary and unjust exertion for the reader.

Professor Beach suggests that certain of our national traits have hampered writers in their pursuit of sweet and serviceable English. We want short cuts. Says he:

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"In one way or another the crudeness of our prose writing is attributable to our national impatience, our disposition to assume a degree of culture which we do not possess, or to force its development more rapidly than is compatible with soundness and sweetness. Our intellectuals are like coaches standing on the side lines and urging us to steal a base. They seem to think the shortcomings of American literature may all be laid at the door of Puritan Philistinism, overlooking the simple factors of time and ripeness.

Our public men confide their voices to electrical amplifiers, trusting that somehow the same machinery that enlarges their words will fill them with substance of thought and personal grace. Their spacious phrases make one think of the false fronts of tin and wood with which railway hotels give themselves importance in Manitoba and Nebraska. Our aesthetes and professors of sensual culture switch on the pink lights; they burn pastilles, and, lounging on their plush divans, lispingly recommend their substitutes as cheaper and more satisfying than the genuine article."

There is a good deal of very debatable matter between the covers of "The Outlook for American Prose." Like all good criticisms, the book sometimes is controversial. Surely there would be little gain in going over once again certain broad principles on which we are all agreed and then rounding off with a few pious wishes as to the future well-being of American prose. Already too much critical writing here bears this character. Nothing could be fairer than the way in which Professor Beach always submits quotations in proof of his complaints. When he is too dogmatic (and it seems to me that, very occasionally, he is) he gives the reader ample opportunity to come to an opposite opinion.

He seems to have read a good many rather indifferent novels with the most diabolical care. Hear him go after Mr. Hutchinson. He is speaking of some other authors a little less peccant than the author of "If Winter Comes." "They do not," he says, "indulge in mawkish pentameters and lisping Homeric similes, like Mr. Hutchinson; they do not, like him, quote and garble the poems of Stevenson and Byron and Wordsworth; 'If Winter Comes' (p. 411): 'This

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Freedom, (pp. 151, 195); not to speak of the litany, and the 'Familiar Rules of Mathematics' (p. 224)."

Now that reminds me of nothing so much as the radio reports of the Dempsey-Tunney fight. "Tunney gets in five fast lefts to the head." "Tunney rocks Dempsey with a hard right to the jaw." Only here, of course, the authors cannot hit back, even if they have a mind to. One must not forget that.

In "The Outlook for American Prose" one meets a caustic, though by no means bad-tempered, teacher of English, firmly planted behind the neat desk of his profession, scolding and chastising a group of prominent post-graduates who have sadly forgotten certain rudimentary lessons of their high school rhetoric class.

THEY HAD TO SEE PARIS

By HOMER CROY

"Henry James would turn in his grave—Mark Twain would give a deep chuckle."

Nowadays a trip to Europe is the one great adventure left for a united American family. Perhaps Pike Peters and his wife and children would, two generations ago, have "moved out West" in a covered wagon. As a child Pike himself had been what in Oklahoma is called a "stripper;" he had sat beside his mother on the hard seat of a spring wagon on a sunny morning when, "at the blowing of bugles, a tumbling torrent of people had swept over the line and raced across what is now Northern Oklahoma and staked out their farms." That day his father had ridden ahead on a swift saddle horse to secure a homestead. But when in 1925, Pike's oil well came in a gusher, the town of Clearwater, the state of Oklahoma, in fact all the United States were too small for them; "they had to see Paris."

What Paris did to them, and what they did to Paris, is Homer Croy's story. Sometimes it is broad farce; as when the ever-maladroit Pike, while trying his hand at archery, puts an arrow through the silk hat of a debonair count, or when he appears at his wife's *grande soiree* in their newly-rented chateau, half-seas over and wearing a suit of sixteenth century armor. Sometimes the author obviously is attempting something a little more serious, as in the incident of Pike's temptation by Claudine, the Parisian Cleopatra, or in the son Ross's facile enticement into the gilded pitfalls of the metropolis.

Always it is about Pike Peters himself that the interest centers. He is genuine, well-drawn and well-conceived. There is something inherently likable about the fellow. You see him running his Ford garage

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at Clearwater, scoffing at the idea that there might be fabulous wealth in the new oil boom. You see him refusing to stampede when his well goes over crown-block and a great fortune is his in an instant. The scene when the well is "shot" is really the best thing in the book. Pike has a fine, tolerant, one might almost say all-suffering love for his family. The European trip, like much else in his life, was no design of his own. Pike Peters is a Babbitt, almost as convincing as the original, but immeasurably more winning and in some respects much fairer to the life he represents.

A good many of the other actors in this comedy are caricatures, almost as grotesque as the creatures of a comic strip. Mr. Croy is writing to amuse, and he succeeds. His French aristocrats and titled celebrities are drawn exactly as the American people love to picture them, lazy, effeminate, and ever ready to jump through hoops on hearing the awe-inspiring tinkle of a few good American dollars. Ultimately everything and everybody in "They Had to See Paris" revert to normality auspiciously. Opal Peters is preserved from marrying a French count and conducted safely into the chaste embrace of an American radio salesman. Ross Peters is dissuaded by the kindly, broad-minded advice of his father from maintaining a *maison a deux* with an artist's model. Claudine, the siren of the boulevards, plies her wiles in vain on the incorruptible Pike. Mrs. Peters, on returning to Clearwater, becomes a social luminary, and lectures informally on her European experiences. The realism of this last touch is almost savage.

But concerning one happy experience of the Peters family it might perhaps be well to caution prospective travelers with social aspirations. It is not, alas, usually practicable for some unknown Americans to entertain some of the greatest names of France and a Russian grand duke merely on payment of a nominal sum per head. Of course, Mr. Croy admits that the grand duke's presence cost Pike \$500.00, and for that sum it would seem that he ought to have drawn a pair of kings for tea. But such things are sometimes difficult to arrange.

This is a book well calculated to cause poor old Henry James to

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turn over in his grave. But it is equally certain that Mark Twain would give a deep chuckle and present the accolade of a titanic slap on the back of this fellow-Missourian who has used his own pet devices of broad comedy and extravagant burlesque in depicting the adventures of these modern innocents abroad.

POINTS OF VIEW

By STUART P. SHERMAN

"Valiantly flutters the banner of his conservatism."

Any estimate of Dr. Stuart P. Sherman's literary critique is apt to be colored by the degree of one's own predilection for the God of things as they are. So valiantly does the good professor flutter the banner of his conservatism that it is sometimes difficult to observe his progress down the high road of criticism. However, a little patient observation is apt to convince one that this man knows where he is heading, or at least where he aspires to go. Herein he holds a certain advantage over many of his more youthful and volatile contemporaries. In a recent volume called "Points of View" he has gathered together dissimilar articles that have appeared in various public prints. These form a characteristic and mannerly collection.

For Dr. Sherman is not innately a truculent or contentious critic. He is prone to write urbanely on themes well suited to the gentler magazines, or to lectures delivered under semi-social auspices. In the present volume he would determine from the nature of our aspirations, health, education, athletic asceticism, etc., a tendency toward a new American type. He becomes whimsically admonitory over the dangers of stagnation after forty. He considers candidly, and with great good temper, the question of an established literary censorship. Diverse personalities interest him, W. C. Brownell, Sinclair Lewis, Booth Tarkington, and Oscar Straus. He even strays so far afield as Samuel Butler, Disraeli, George Sand and Flaubert.

But the heart of the book is in the essays that have a whiff of battle smoke in them. Certain tendencies of the moment irritate him extremely. In a paper called "On Falling in Hate," he says: "In America, whenever a writer wishes to bring home to his readers

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in a single heavily charged epithet the quintessence of materialism, flatness, monotony, crassness, violence, revolt, disgust, he almost instinctively nowadays calls it 'midwestern' and lets it go at that. He says 'midwestern materialism,' 'midwestern monotony,' 'midwestern crassness,' 'midwestern violence,' 'midwestern disgust,' and his reader feels disillusion descending upon the prairie lands and the prairie cities from the hearts of midwestern writers who have hated their environment with an increasing hatred for the last thirty years."

There you have expressed succinctly what many thoughtful people have resented in our "eloquent apostles of disillusion: Mr. Garland, Mr. Herrick, Mr. Dreiser, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Hecht, Mr. Bodenheim, Mr. Haldeman-Julius, and the rest." That sort of hitting is dexterous, well-timed and straight from the shoulder.

But unfortunately Dr. Sherman does not always acquit himself so well. His attempt to analyze and demonstrate by selected examples just what constitutes an American style proves him much less adept than his own arch-enemy, H. L. Mencken, in precipitating the national essence. In his light moments this eminent pedagogue is apt to be distressingly ponderous, and in the inclusion of certain slightly stale and never too significant prefaces in a book offered afresh to the public seems of dubious value.

Two papers, those on Sinclair Lewis and Brander Matthews, deserve particular mention, if only for a certain richness of feeling which tends to set them apart from the remainder. His appreciation of the creator of "Main Street" is judicious and thoughtful; it is the more valuable because of his obvious aversion to Mr. Lewis's shoddy imitators. It is a gesture of honest and unstinted admiration.

But when writing on Brander Matthews and the Mohawks his heart grows warm in the congenial exercise of slapping right and left at the unmannerly younger writers who show no decent respect for their seniors. He decries the churlishness of these newcomers. He regrets the last deference with which Howells approached Lowell, or Whitman dedicated "Leaves of Grass" to Emerson. "The beauty

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of this antique relation between the elder and the younger writers is lost because the younger generation no longer knocks at the door. It thunders at the door, it batters, it hammers, it bangs, it thumps, it kicks, it whacks, it wrenches, it lunges, it storms—it would require a Rabelaisian vocabulary to express all the indignities which the younger generation substitutes for knocking at the door. This somewhat barbaric performance, Brander Matthews, with his unfailing courtesy of phrase, calls sounding a 'tocsin' at the door. The ring-leaders of this innovation in manners, the most impatient of our young people, are hardened journalists of forty, with a following of youths upon whose caustic lips the maternal milk is hardly dry. They are determined to have a better time than their fathers had. I sympathize with the object. But I am not always sure that they are going about 'the great task of happiness' in the best way."

Now it is possible to be in some disagreement with Dr. Sherman on various phases of his estimate of the field of contemporary letters and yet to prefer the professor rampant, so to speak, full of ire and outraged decorum, to the professor couchant, writing pallidly and amiably of trifles which, neither to himself nor to us, can greatly matter. It is possible, too, to feel that Dr. Sherman fails sometimes to survey the productions of certain ultra-modern penmen with quite enough critical detachment. In these "Points of View" of his may be found much sanity and downright integrity, but little evidence of imagination or enchantment. In the well-worn words of Pope's couplet he is one:

"That not in fancy's maze has wander'd long,
But stop'd at truth, and moraliz'd his song.

THUNDER ON THE LEFT

By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

"Like half-forgotten memories of a day of one's own."

With this novel Christopher Morley seems to have undergone a change of amazing richness and strangeness. Hitherto a comfortable fellow, who has loved plum puddings and pipe smoking and who sometimes has had queer fancies about a canine world, he here exacts eager consideration as a serious novelist. By a delicate and carefully sustained contrast of the worlds of children and grown-ups he has produced a poignant allegory. You may call "Thunder on the Left" a comedy if you will, but the author warns you on the flyleaf with a line from Goldsmith that "the undertaking a comedy not merely sentimental was very dangerous."

Tell me where is fancy bred,

Or in the heart, or in the head?

That old question seems rather pertinent here. Somehow "Thunder on the Left" appears a fantasy begotten wholly in the head; sometimes its cerebral origin tells against it when Mr. Morley attempts an atmosphere of pure midsummer night's dream and moonshine. One is relieved to get this criticism down and done with, for it is an unwelcome task to pick flaws in so lovely and pensive a device for revealing human sensitiveness and human frailty. Indeed, it is hard to remember that certain things retained from "Thunder on the Left" came from a book at all; they are like half-forgotten memories of a day of one's own. Mr. Morley asked his publishers to read his manuscript slowly. That was advice that may well be passed on to each prospective reader.

It all began when the children at Martin's tenth birthday party commenced to wonder whether "grown-ups really had a good time." The question was graver than they bargained for, no doubt. There

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was some talk of a game in which all the children should spy on the enemy—for, of course, “they never tell the truth if they think children are around. They don’t want us to know what it’s like! Possibly it would be better to send one first; he could see what he would find and report.”

As Martin blew out the candles on his cake he made a wish. Mr. Morley sees that he gets it. With an Alice-in-Wonderland disregard of time and space he projects him into the world of adults twenty years hence. The other children, now grown of course, become the actors in the drama—ordinary enough by most standards—on which Martin spies. He may even behold how the world will alter his own simplicity and blunt the tender edge of his sensitiveness, since the charming and somehow still naive George (really the most successful of Mr. Morley’s characters because containing the most of himself) is only Martin as the buffeting of the years might fashion him. But it is Martin himself, a creature from another world, Peter Pan puzzled by highballs and stoutly averse to flirting, who sharpens our own perceptions. His presence is like the tuning fork that makes us suddenly aware of flats and discords in a familiar melody.

Phyllis and George have now taken the old-fashioned seashore house where Martin’s birthday had once been celebrated. It is now their children whose voices fill the high-ceilinged rooms and whose brown legs run on the smooth yellow sands. Ben and Ruth and Joyce have come down from New York for the week-end. The action all takes place during one brooding summer day and night. A storm is coming up. Mr. Morley catches perfectly the over-charged atmosphere of the elderly, weather-beaten house where trifles echo and reverberate in the stillness and memories are stirred by minute fragments of the past. Again and again as one reads one is lifted by a phrase that carries a luminous picture, by a sentence that holds a subtle thought delicately and precisely captured.

Lest the pleasure that awaits all lovers of a whimsical tale beautifully told be marred, even slightly, perhaps no more of the plot of “Thunder on the Left” should be given. To summarize it in

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words less happy than the author's must be to do him and his readers disservice. So much of the charm lies in what he himself calls "wandering parentheses of thought." It is almost safe to give assurance that "Thunder on the Left" will make delightful, but hardly merry, reading. There is a trifle too much poignancy in the tale for that. On finishing it one is likely to be left in that state in which rumination always put the melancholy Jaques, "wrapped in a most humorous sadness."

THE FOOL IN CHRIST

By GERHART HAUPTMANN

*I met a stranger yester e'en;
I put food in the eating place,
Drink in the drinking place,
Music in the listening place;
In the name of the Sacred Triune
He blessed me and my house,
My cattle and my dear ones.
And the lark said in her song:
"Often, often, often
Goeth the Christ in the stranger's guise.
Often, often, often,
Goeth the Christ in the stranger's guise."*

—OLD GAELIC RUNE.

In those lines an idea which has fascinated men since Christianity entered Europe is given one of its earliest expressions. If Christ came again as a man, how would the world receive him? Some fifteen years ago Gerhart Hauptmann, still perhaps the most distinguished figure in contemporary German literature, attempted to answer the question in a novel, which the Viking Press has now reissued. Hauptmann's vision of a gentle, pathetic Christ-figure rising among the peasants of Silesia is a more profound and more poetic conception than such familiar English versions as "In His Steps" or "The Passing of the Third Floor Back." Yet his is a thoroughly Teutonic sort of dream; to American readers "The Fool in Christ" may possibly appear over-long and over-ponderous. The parallelism between New Testament incidents and the events in the life of Emanuel Quint, the poor German carpenter's apprentice, is worked with almost machinelike exactitude.

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Perhaps, even for the unorthodox, what is most extraordinary about these recent simulacra of Christ is the way in which the original Messiah dwarfs his literary successors. Hauptmann's book, together with Dostoevsky's "Idiot" (an infinitely greater achievement), represents the best that modern genius can do in depicting a counterpart of "The Man of Sorrows." Yet both Prince Myshkin and Emanuel Quint, inspired and lovable unquestionably, leave in retrospect an impression of sick-souled futility which no perusal, however skeptical, of the four gospels is likely to duplicate.

It is doubtful whether Hauptmann's Fool ever meant to claim such close identity with Christ as his followers forced upon him. The poor folk of Silesia, the weavers, shepherds and farm laborers of Hauptmann's boyhood, lonely lives that have inspired his greatest dramatic triumphs, live ever in expectation of the coming of "A Man." The simple, ascetic Quint, contemptible and insignificant to most men, could not escape adoration and deification by a few outcast spirits. These formed a little community, the Brethren of the Valley, with Quint as their bewildered and abstracted head.

The story of the last few years of Quint's troublous life unrolls in several hundred swift scenes; one is often reminded that this is a playwright's novel. Few persons, no matter what their position, remained unimpressed by the Fool; but scarcely any two persons agreed exactly as to his significance. Emanuel himself would never touch even the smallest piece of money, yet he would not ally himself with the political schemes of the Socialists.

Women were peculiarly susceptible to his charm, his strange half-smile that illuminated his long, thin face with its finely cut lips and curly, reddish beard. Quint, however, never knew the love of woman; never until very late in his life did he know friendship. People sought him as thirsty cattle might a stream, yet he seemed to have nothing new to offer them. "The scriptural words of the first genuine Messiah alternated in kaleidoscopic change with the words of this new Messiah, and the same thoughts kept grouping and regrouping themselves in new forms."

Emanuel Quint found only one brief period of happiness in this

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world. For a few months he became one of the household of a cheery, pious old gardener, and this idyllic incident provides almost the only bright relief in a novel whose long drawnout misery becomes at times almost excruciating. He, like St. Paul, was "a Fool for Christ's sake." Like his Divine Master, he was unable to save himself; unlike Him, he was equally incapable of saving others. In a manner not completely free from sensationalism and melodrama, Hauptmann portrays the dreadful doom of a frail fanatic, equipped with nothing but love and humility, facing a harsh world. Almost every form of religious phobia and perversion find place in the pages of "The Fool in Christ." Hauptmann, through long studies in Zurich under Forel, became a ruthless analyst of aberrations of the religious instinct.

Yet the question of Quint's insanity, or of the sanity of the narrow, greedy world that persecuted him, is one which the individual taste of each reader may decide. At any rate, his end was pitiable. He wandered across Germany and into Switzerland, knocking each night upon doors, answering always when asked "Who is there?" "Christ."

Hauptmann closes his novel on a note of grave irony. Someone remarked "that undoubtedly God in heaven must have had His attention drawn to our affairs here on earth by the unusually loud noise of slamming doors. One thanks heaven that the wanderer was only a poor human fool and not Christ Himself."

The next spring Quint's body was found frozen into a deep stratum of ice and snow on the shoulder of one of the peaks of the Alps. A sheet of paper was in his pocket on which were still legible the enigmatic words: "The mystery of the Kingdom?"

TAR: A MIDWEST CHILDHOOD

By SHERWOOD ANDERSON

MITYA'S LOVE

By IVAN BUNIN

"Wistful outlaws in a belligerent and industrial age."

At times both these books are vibrant with the true stuff of poetry; fields and sky, sunshine, the wind and the rain, and the keen bewildered heartache which is youth. Their lyricism has grown up out of widely remote, yet similar, soils; men who know Russia say her countryside much resembles our own Middle West, great stretches of fertile, rolling plains, like Kansas and Nebraska, rich farm lands in the south that recall Ohio and Indiana.

It is significant that in the books of the writers who seem really to belong to us, who have drawn their strength and their vision uniquely from this land, there is unmistakable resemblance to the Russians. A counterpart of Anderson's groping, stumbling quest for truth and beauty, Sandburg's earthly power and battered dreamer's courage, Willa Cather's increasing and almost perverse bitterness, may be found in the books of Bunin, Gorky, Andreev, and Artsybashe. But our writers know neither the gain nor the handicap of walking in the fresh footsteps of giants; it must, indeed, be a strange sensation to seek to match strides with figures like Dostoevsky, Tolstoi and Chekov.

"Tar" and "Mitya's Love" are both tales of youth's awakening; of the way in which the world opens its glamorous, captivating bag of tricks before the eyes of a sensitive boy. Anderson tries to tumble it all out before us like Nature herself; infancy, childhood, the magic freshness of sights, sounds and smells, the first intimations of love and lust, courage and cruelty are sometimes

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poured and sometimes squeezed out in those queer, hesitant, repeatedly regressing sentences of his, strangest of all revelations that the style is the man. Bunin is less ingenious; the wary artist in him compels him to select a pattern. He writes of Mitya's love, and much of the tangled incoherency of youth unravels itself automatically as he draws out the clear thread of passion and lonely longing.

In "Tar," as always, save in a few short stories, Sherwood Anderson has set himself an impossible task. In three hundred pages to follow life as it expands from consciousness to adolescence; the light of the adult understanding to reveal the meaning of all the queer, contradictory terrors and bravadoes of a little boy, is an audacious but unmanageable venture. One thinks of those ingenious diagrams, devised by ardent fly-fishermen, which look like odd little minnows. It is doubtful whether any fish would ever endorse those artful panoramas, and it is unlikely that any child would ever understand or relish "Tar."

Yet the conception of what it means to be a child has fascinated artists always. Anatole France returned to it again and again. Wordsworth in his stately, pious way was as perplexed and bewitched by it as Anderson. The former wrote wistfully of:

" . . . Those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realized."

Anderson, lacking Wordsworth's neat talent for moralizing, wonders, wonders always. He has used this material from his childhood in many short stories and in his autobiographical "Story Teller's Story." So "Tar" is harvested from a field which has already yielded two good crops. But Anderson is a husbandman of mysterious gifts; even his third harvest is abundant. There is nothing monotonous nor worked-out in his material, though his style does grow a little perfunctory. That guileless and unsophisticated manner of his seems in some danger of becoming a mannerism.

TAR: A MIDWEST CHILDHOOD

Bunin belongs to a contemporary school of Russian writers who have nearly all sought to bedeck with melodramatic trimmings the material which Chekov and Turgenev used only for designs in delicate grays and blacks. But in "Mitya's Love" Bunin has controlled to good effect his taste for the grossly theatrical.

A young student who goes home to the country for the holidays, leaving behind him a faithless, childish sweetheart, is surely no theme for the trumpets and drum, the cymbals and tambourine. Bunin plays it softly, delicately, as on a violin. He harmonizes the soft spring and summer of the Russian countryside with the fragile and tender soul of a boy forsaken in his first love affair, forlorn in the homestead where he is the adored young master. The savage, mocking drum-beats that made "The Gentleman From San Francisco" and "Brethren" memorable are here subdued almost to inaudibility, but there is a faint murmur of them beneath the music, enough to utterly redeem "Mitya's Love" from sentimentality.

That the tale is marred a little by Mitya's not quite credible suicide at the end does not matter greatly. Chekov would have scorned such a climax; yet is it not perhaps an intrusion—surely it is the only one—of the spirit of the bloody and disjointed times? Theocritus himself could scarcely have written pure pastorals during the last ten years in Russia. As much as Theocritus, Bunin and Anderson seem wistful outlaws in a belligerent and industrial age. I suspect them to be fellow members of an ancient internationale, kindlier and more esoteric than that which today makes headquarters at Moscow.

THE HARD-BOILED VIRGIN

By FRANCES NEWMAN

*"Where the virgins are soft as the roses they twine,
And all save the spirit of man is divine."*

—BYRON in *"The Bride of Abydos."*

It is indeed a far cry from the lush maidens of Lord Byron's fancy to Miss Frances Newman's acidulous "Hard-Boiled Virgin." Here is a book entirely concerned with a young woman and her strenuous exertions to lose what in the old-fashioned phrase used to be called her "purity." Fiction and drama, concocted within the memory of living man, were wont to record epic struggles for the preservation of the condition which Frances Newman's heroine endured so unwillingly. In the words of Moliere's immortal physician, "We have changed all that."

The excuse for such a book as the "Hard-Boiled Virgin" (should one feel as I do that it deplorably needs one) is that it may be telling the truth at last about a state of affairs concerning which everyone has shammed and dissembled too long. And, since it is a novel and not a psychological tract, it should be entertaining with a sprightly Congrevian impudence or whimsical with something of the naive and gentle impropriety of old Anatole France. Respectfully, and with at least the desire not to be discourteous, reserving always the most lively admiration for the author's critical as distinct from her creative gift, this reviewer records his opinion that Miss Newman's novel is neither truthful nor piquant. It is absurd and it is dreary.

Candor compels the admission that the most distinguished authorities may be cited against him. James Branch Cabell has said: "This appears to me the most brilliant, the most candid, the most civilized, and always within the limits of its chosen field, the most

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profound book yet written by an American woman." H. L. Mencken adds: "I go with Cabell all the way and even beyond. You have done an original and first-rate job; I kiss your hand." One has a sneaking desire to surprise the sturdy cynic of Baltimore in that gesture.

Just what can these so eminent authors see in this stilted, tortuous, absolutely dialogueless chronicle of the inadequate sex life of the daughter of a fine old southern family? And, by the way, when is the fictional South to be inhabited by anyone except negroes, mountaineers, and fine old southern families? The book is original in that it transgresses most of the canons of novel writing evolved by rudimentary good sense. It is bold in that it mentions slyly a few minor aspects of sexual adolescence, so far still startling on the printed page. Twenty years ago the book would have seemed outrageously daring, but competition in its line is getting keener every day.

If Katharine Faraday, Miss Newman's heroine, ever should come alive, if she ever for one moment should arise from her attitude of Buddhistic contemplation of her own generative potentialities, she might become pitiful and dreadful. She does not. Sometimes she is possessed of a sort of parched cleverness; always she is unreal. Her barren pilgrimage in pursuit of passion is recounted in sentences like these:

"On the third Wednesday afternoon in November, Katharine Faraday dressed herself in a white crepe de chine frock which had been made in Atlanta, and in which she was officially introduced to all those ladies whom she already knew and who could reasonably be expected to ask the right kind of young men to sit beside her at dinner or to sit behind her in theater and opera boxes during the uncomfortable years when she would be professionally engaged in looking about for a husband, and in which she was also introduced to those ladies who could only be expected to ask her to lunch and to play bridge with girls who might ask her to dinner."

Or:

"She was also surprised when she could not definitely refuse

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the honor of becoming mistress to a prince of prose, and when she only told him that she did not expect to be anything more than an episode to any man, but that she did not like the idea of being an incident even to him, and when she went on to tell that she seemed to be hopelessly virginal by nature, and that whenever she saw a girl shopping with a baby held hotly in her arms, she decided again to be good and to let anyone who liked be clever."

In spite of this resolution there is considerably more brightness than benignity about Katharine Faraday. If it seems incredible that an entire novel could be written in sentences closely resembling the two above, spend \$2.50 and see for yourself.

FIERY PARTICLES

By C. E. MONTAGUE

"Flashes of insight into the psychology of cannon fodder."

"Fiery Particles" are stories with a certain vehement fidelity to truth; they are, indeed, ardent tales, but they deal sometimes with a war which all would willingly forget. Is it possible that such a book, even though superlatively well done, may find an audience here in the tranquil middle West? Disillusioned booksellers are frankly dubious. And yet, if they are right it is a pity, for this unusual collection should be a rare feast for all lovers of the truly first rate.

The author is a middle-aged English journalist whose brilliant university career as a scholar and an athlete is still remembered. For many years he has been chief leader writer on the Manchester Guardian. In 1914, though he was then in his middle forties, he managed to enlist in one of the sportsmen's battalions and saw four years' service as a private, bombing sergeant, subaltern and, finally, as a captain attached to the general staff. He seems to have been granted rather a long and thorough look at modern war. Now, after four years post-war "disenchantment" he comes as near as any one man may to "seeing it steadily and seeing it whole."

Obviously, modern military experience is very poor equipment for artistic achievement. However, Montague's schooling has included a magnificent grounding in the classics, a life-long and truly amorous intimacy with Shakespeare and twenty years on the editorial staff of one of the most distinguished English newspapers. What he writes can scarcely fail to appeal to thoughtful readers.

The stories in the present collection have a somewhat varied scope. "Honors Easy" resembles more than any of the others the author's recent "Disenchantment." But here an ironical arraignment

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ment of the English manner of awards for martial prowess is redeemed by caustic wit from any possible accusation of doctrinaire dullness. "Disenchantment" was a truly admirable piece of work, but many American readers were, quite justifiably, unmoved by it. America has its post-war ills, of course, but they are not, generally speaking, those from which England is suffering so poignantly today. We can sympathize, but it is perhaps too much to ask that we should understand.

"The First Blood Sweep" once more recalls the war; it is a somber, swiftly-moving tale with occasional vivid flashes of insight into the psychology of cannon fodder. "Two or Three Witnesses" recounts an ingenuous youth's initiation into the prematurely-aged craft of journalism, and in it London newspaper men, true products of Fleet street, stand out bizarrely against a pastoral Irish setting. "All for Peace and Quiet" is genuinely Irish, even though the scene is a British military hospital after the lights are out. Here, in neighboring cots, are two doughty though disabled Celts—Sein Fein and Ulster—who agree on nothing save that "ye'd not know what war was till ye'd visit the County Fermanagh."

The book is bright with delightful bits of Irish portraiture. Montague always preserves sufficient detachment from the occult whimsical soul of the Gael to illuminate it admirably. For this purpose nothing equals the first story, "Another Temple Gone." Farrel, the single-minded enthusiast, the selfless seeker after perfection, distills illicit whisky. But what whisky! The stern and frigid rectitude of Constables Duffey and Boam melts at their first ecstatic sip of this bog-nectar. In coming under the benign spell of this potation, purged of all base alloy, it does not appear that the constables had "put an enemy into their mouths to steal away their brains." Instead they became philosophers on the spot. How is this for a reflection on man's spiritual and fleshly components—induced, mark you, by two or three very small glasses:

"Aye! Every man has a pack of old trash discommodin' his soul. Pitaties and meal and the like—worked up into flesh on the man. An' the whole of it made of the dirt in the fields, a month or

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two back! The way it's a full barrow load of the land will be walking on every two legs that you'd see shankin' past! It's what he's come out of. And what he goes back into being. Aye, and what he can't do without having, as long as he lasts. An' yet it's not he. An' yet he must keep a fast hold on it always, or else he'll be dead. An' yet I'll engage he'll have to be fighting it always—it and the sloth it would put on the grand venomous life he has in him. God help us, it's difficult!"

Well, that is a goodly-sized lot of the stuff Montague has brewed for you. The stories are so different that it is impossible to furnish a typical quotation and, of course, the quality is not quite even; there are one or two that seem a little precious, a trifle hyper-subtle in their overtones and allusions. But "Fiery Particles" may be safely recommended to anyone who enjoys good yarning and the free play of a keen intelligence tempered by much buffeting and richly patterned with the gold of mellow Shakespearean sunshine.

SEVENTY YEARS A SHOWMAN

By "LORD" GEORGE SANGER

"Populus vult decipi, et decipitur."

"Lord" George Sanger marched and counter-marched his circuses over the Old World during a period that coincided with and overlapped slightly the reign of good Queen Victoria. He pitched his tents in every country of Europe except Russia. His title he acquired during a legal altercation with his American rival, Buffalo Bill (William F. Cody). The Yankee filed his bill as the "Honorable" William Cody, whereupon Sanger declared that if Cody were an "Honorable" he was a "Lord," and altered all his advertising and circus posters accordingly.

His book (really a reprint of a work which has been years out of print) proves once again the immense popular interest in personalities. Sanger was by way of being a "character," a "card," very similar, in his part of the world, to our own P. T. Barnum. His intellectual pigs, oysters who smoked pipes, and savages gathered from the Liverpool slums, find their counterparts in Barnum's Fee-gee Mermaid, his woolly horse and dog-faced boy. Both were consummate showmen and willing to give the public exactly what it desired.

Sanger had wonderful success with wild animals, and his colossal spectacles were undoubtedly very fine and made some pretensions to artistry. Both Sanger and Barnum, oddly enough, once obtained genuine specimens of the Siamese white elephant and both met with the same enlightening experience. The public did not like them; the elephants were not white enough. A coat of whitewash judiciously applied to an ordinary elephant suited the customers much better. As old Tacitus put it long ago: *"Populus vult decipi, et decipitur"* ("The people wish to be deceived, and they are").

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Aside from an amusing demonstration of individual acuteness and public gullibility, Sanger's story is worth reading for the picture which the first chapters afford of early Victorian England. Sometimes one gets a deliciously fresh and bright-hued impression; as though one of Dickens's best characters were to write an autobiography. He brings back the days when, long before the railroads, the shambling caravans came trooping in over the great roads to the fairs; gypsies, fierce, secretive and quarrelsome; old-fashioned roundabouts or merry-go-rounds, depending for their motive power on the boys of the village stimulated by an occasional ride, and peep-shows, primeval ancestors of the moving picture, gaudily lighted by tallow candles.

It was in a peep-show that young George Sanger won his spurs as a showman. His father, a sailor disabled aboard Nelson's Victory at Trafalgar, operated a show which "had twenty-six glasses, so that twenty-six persons could see the views at the same time, the pictures being pulled up and down by strings." Young George soon became what we would call "ballyhoo" man for the outfit, and his "line of patter" of ninety years ago is really not bad. Topical pictures, crudely daubed views of recent crimes, and prodigies, were, of course, the great drawing card. "Walk up, walk up," the five-year-old barker would pipe.

"Walk up and see the only correct views of the terrible murder of Marta Martin! . . . The arrest of the murderer, Corder, as he was at breakfast with the two Miss Singletons. Lee, the officer, is seen entering the door and telling Corder of the serious charge against him. Observe the horrified faces of the ladies, and note, also, so true to life are these pictures, that even the saucepan in shown upon the fire and the minute glass upon the table timing the boiling eggs!"

It is a long cry from that to Hollywood and Coney Island, but, as Kenneth Grahame points out in a delightful preface, the line is a straight one.

"Lord" George Sanger knew robust and racy days. Perhaps, except for the old gentleman's inimitable naivete, there is nothing

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unique about the delightful incident when "Ann Hartley and 'Watercress Betty' had a standup fight outside our caravan to settle who had the best right to speak to me." "Really," says "Lord" George at eighty, "the fault was not mine if I was too good looking for the ladies' peace of mind."

Yet Sanger saw things that are scarcely credible today. He only died in 1911, yet he knew from John O'Groats to Land's End the strange, grim, full-flavored England before standardized civilization had faded the colors both of brutality and romance. The ferocity of the crowds even as late as 1850 makes astonishing reading:

"Lancashire men in those days gave very little attention to the use of their fists. The clog was their weapon and they considered there was nothing unmanly in kicking and biting to death—they would use their teeth like dogs—any person who had the misfortune to incur their anger."

Sanger once watched the poor proprietor of a gingerbread stall, "expostulating with a crowd of miners about something." As he tells it:

"All at once over went his stall, and the next minute he himself was under their feet with all of them kicking at him anywhere and everywhere as hard as they could. From our position on the platform we could see the poor fellow's body with the heavy clogs battered into it as though it was a stuffed sack instead of a human being."

I wish that white-handed panegyrists of British chivalry and gentleness like Dean Inge and the late Sir Walter Raleigh might have heard "Lord" George tell of his Lancashire lads, Chartist demonstrators, and unscrupulous country squires. Those gentlemen who like to suggest that life was very different in the halcyon days of the unspoiled English countryside, or who choose to believe that since time immemorial the native Englishman has been divinely and uniquely gifted with an unconquerable sense of fair play might profit much from this weather-beaten old showman's reminiscences. The self-satisfaction of the public school Englishman, protected all his life by caste prejudice and advantage, be-

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comes annoying when it betrays him into generalizations about American or Continental ethical inferiority. Experiences like Sanger's might do much to puncture such high flown pretentions.

Some of the most amusing of these reminiscences are "Lord" George Sanger's contacts with royalty in the person of Queen Victoria. He recounts them piously, with bowed head and bated breath, but really they are extremely funny. The queen was certainly a "red-hot circus fan," and the letters written at the royal direction inquiring as to the well-being of members of the menagerie are most amusing. One remembers that P. T. Barnum also received his share of royal honors; he and General Tom Thumb were perhaps the queen's favorite Americans.

THE SILVER SPOON

By JOHN GALSWORTHY

"A mellow, slightly blurred illumination of the contemporary scene."

It seems not unlikely that an antiquarian seeking acquaintance with the manners and usages of comfortable England between the years 1890 and 1914 will find some of his most colorful material in the novels of John Galsworthy. But, if he is wise, he will turn elsewhere for guidance in the post-war years. The dizzy, Americanized London of today, the motor-ridden countryside, the truculently class-conscious workingman, and beyond, lamentably beyond all else, the savage and deplorable young people of the moment—they are all too much for John. However, no artist of his years and wisdom should take these jazz-age juveniles too seriously. It is almost pathetic to observe his polished, elderly intelligence struggling to comprehend the insurrectional antics of insignificant hoydens.

Fleur Forsyte has always served for Galsworthy as the symbol of all that in the new age was inscrutable and inequitable. Several times before, notably in "The White Monkey," she has walked with dainty and selfishly insensitive steps across his stage. Once more in "The Silver Spoon" she is the focusing point for the mellow and slightly blurred illumination which he brings to bear on the contemporary scene. Fleur has always accepted without wonder or gratitude the adoration of her father, indomitable old Soames Forsyte, and of her husband, young Michel Mont. Somehow she has come to imagine that London society can be brought to heel as easily as these two. She conceives that a political salon, while incidentally helpful to Michel's career, might provide an amusing and flattering background for herself.

However, she was never able to overcome one initial mistake: her involvement in a drawing-room duel with Lady Marjorie Fer-

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rar. This young woman, proving even more vivid, reckless and selfish than Fleur herself—and being quite unhandicapped by a husband, a child or a vestige of moral sense (under the burden of all three of these Fleur staggered)—won the contest hands down.

As a libel suit the affair reached the law courts. There the attempt by Fleur's counsel to traduce Lady Marjorie by arraigning all the novels, plays and immoralities which she sponsored proved something of a boomerang. The jury was impressed: but all the people Fleur cared about disapproved exceedingly, for "Sir James Foskisson had done his job too well; he had slavered his clients with his own self-righteousness. Better the confessed libertine than those who brought her to judgment!" Nothing was left for poor Fleur but the dreadful prospect of a luxurious trip around the world.

Perhaps the book does not lack a certain subdued irony, but the theme seems better adapted to an aggressively satirical treatment, like Pope's "Rape of the Lock" or the last cantos of "Don Juan."

Somehow Galsworthy always fails to make Fleur significant enough. Hers is indeed a washed-out modernity. Shy, middle-aged gentlemen have not infrequently portrayed young women who have gone down the years as the piquant prototypes of their age; Clarissa Harlowe and Becky Sharpe are cases in point. But Fleur fades into a shallow bobbed-haired ghost whenever she comes into contact with a real personality, such as old Soames, the last important figure from the "Forsyte Saga" still in the ring.

Soames's life, one remembers, had gone to pieces once, years ago, when as a "Man of Property" he had lost his first wife to Phillip Bossiney. Soames learned then that love is not a manifestation of the acquisitive instinct, and Galsworthy's art is the more subtle in that he never articulately acknowledges his new wisdom. Rather it is manifest in his long suffering, unselfish devotion to Fleur, the spoiled daughter of his second marriage.

Perhaps, though one devoutly hopes otherwise, we have taken our last leave of old Soames on the deck of the steamer as he sets out around the world with Fleur. His face at that moment is un-

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forgettable: "long, chinny, gray-mustached, very motionless; absorbed and lonely, as might be that of some long distance bird arrived on an unknown shore, and looking back towards the land of its departure." His final word on England was: "They expect too much now; there's no interest taken in being alive."

If that is the essence of Galsworthy's diagnosis of the foment of modern youth—he is a shrewder analyst than the characters of *Fleur* and the Lady Marjorie Ferrar might seem to indicate. It explains much: that sheer inability to savor and appreciate the simple fact of existence; that lack of vitality which falls back flabbily upon secondary stimuli.

"The Silver Spoon" may be regarded from another aspect which it has seemed simpler to ignore until due consideration to the book as a novel had been given. Like so many of Galsworthy's stories and plays, it is also an essay at social criticism; and here his remedies for the disjointed times are more specific than in "Fraternity," "Strife," or "Justice." In "The Silver Spoon" he supposes that a veteran statesman, Sir James Foggart, has sponsored a small political cult, advocating that the English people return to the land, grow as much of their own food as possible, cut their losses in Europe and ship all their surplus children at a tender age to the dominions. England once more should become the right little, tight little island as in her Elizabethan days of greatness; while the empire should be one great self-supporting unit.

Such views are unquestionably Galsworthy's own. They are the same that he expressed less than a year ago in a letter published in the press the world over on the question "Is England finished?" They are the well considered opinions of a thoughtful, sensitive intelligence; they come from the heart of one who has always been, in his unobtrusive way, a fine gentleman and patriot.

That he is also, within his limitations, a consummate literary artist is almost beyond contention. "The Silver Spoon" adds one more stone to an edifice which he has been patiently and artfully constructing for many years. Granted that this phase of his English social commentary—for his novels of the Forsyte family are no

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less—is not the most significant, it still remains a unique and diverting contribution.

No one else today writes so definitely in the tradition of Scott, Thackeray, Kingsley and Charles Reade, the select coterie who were primarily English gentlemen and only secondarily English novelists. But since Ruskin has defined gentlemanliness as only another word for intense humanity, perhaps a case might be made for these fellows. It is just possible that their narrow code and conventional creed may make them more intensely aware of certain sorts of nice emotional and ethical distinctions.

HARMER JOHN

By HUGH WALPOLE

"Born tippler of the dangerous wine of reform."

On a wet, stormy night Hjalmar Johanson came to Polchester, the sleepy little cathedral town which Hugh Walpole, like Trollope in the immortal Barchester series, is using as a setting for several novels of English provincial life. The men of Polchester could not master Johanson's Swedish name, so they rechristened him Harmer John; nor could they master or understand his strong, childish spirit, so they broke him, smashed the life out of him and threw him in the Pol, their narrow cold little provincial river.

No one is better qualified than Hugh Walpole to write of England's cathedral towns. During an impressionable boyhood and youth he lived in two or three of them, and now his mental attitude faces him definitely towards the traditional past of England. Some such equipment is essential for an understanding of fine nuances like the degree of superiority that a Minor Canon may justifiably feel when chatting with the rector of a town parish, or the proper, gentle patronage with which a lady of the precinct set may smile down upon the wife of the mayor. Such matters are vital in towns like Polchester.

Yet what was poor Harmer John, stalwart teacher of Swedish gymnastics, instinctive lover of the beautiful, and born tippler of the dangerous wine of reform, to make of it all? He came to Polchester because his English mother had taught him to love the land. Polchester, poised high above the sea, with its lovely old houses, its river, and its age-old cathedral soaring pearl-gray into the mild-blue Southern England sky, was very easy to love. At first the people too were marvelously kind. It was all splendid, but Harmer

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John was cursed with the longing for perfection. That proved his undoing.

Why, if these good citizens were willing that he massage their stomachs, harden their muscles and build real manhood into their sons, would they not permit him to help a little in rubbing out an ugly kink or two in their town? Seatown, now a vile wretched slum, almost in the shadow of the great cathedral; how could the most beautiful little city in England tolerate such a blemish? But Harmer John was not an Englishman, and Polchester was austere and stubbornly English. No foreigner might criticise it with impunity.

Harmer John's desire to purge and beautify the town soon cost him nearly all his new-won friends there. Indirectly, it cost him the Polchester girl whom he expected to marry. All the intricate wheels within wheels in the life of the place which his naive friendliness and charm at first had set going in his favor were now mysteriously thrown into reverse and commenced to crush him. Harmer John still had one loyal friend, Tom Longstaffe, rector of one of the town churches, and a little outside the sacred circle of the cathedral set. But loyalty to him and his once errant daughter proved disastrous. He still had one secret and abiding inspiration, the memory of Simon Petre, a boy of the town, who, nearly two hundred years before, had gone to Italy, taken fire from the last red embers of the Renaissance and returned a sculptor of fine promise to beautify Polchester. Death had taken him before he had time for much accomplishment. Harmer John rediscovered and restored a little fountain that had been his handiwork. That was the only tangible, unhidden thing which Fate allowed the great-hearted Swede with all his grandiose dreams to do for Polchester. There is a very pretty symbolism in the little incident. The flame which Simon Petre bore had kindled in an alien brand.

Smug respectability smothered that flame, and cruel, oafish stupidity extinguished it. Harmer John at last went down under a mob of snarling men, dwellers in that same sea town which he had tried so hard to befriend, where he had at last gone to live when all

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respectable Polchester had turned against him. Like many another reformer, the fruits of his labors ripened only after his death. Seatown with its hideous squalor disappeared. A row of sober-gray houses, very neat and very ugly, replaced the old slum. Men came to think so kindly of the big, warm-hearted gymnast that a small brass tablet was erected on the spot where he was murdered. All of which may or may not have been much comfort to the beauty-loving soul of Harmer John.

On the fly-leaf of this volume is a list of fifteen novels by Hugh Walpole. Without claiming to have read all of them I yet venture the opinion that "Harmer John" goes near to being the best book he has done. He is incurably a mannered writer, and there is much to be said for those who find most of his mannerisms annoying. In "Harmer John" he does a good deal of apparently unnecessary shifting and shuffling with his "point of view." But he has a spirited story to tell, and he tells it. That is a novelist's chief business, and when, as here, performed adequately, it is indeed a captious reader who should demand more.

WHALING NORTH AND SOUTH

By F. V. MORLEY and J. S. HODGSON

"Well-spiced pemmican of blubber and whale meat."

Today, though men may not yet "draw out Leviathan with an hook," they capture him in abrupt and almost disdainful fashion. From the bows of steam-driven "whale-chasers" they destroy him with explosive harpoons of one hundred pounds weight; jam, with a long lance, a compressed air-line into his vast side and blow him up; then, tail foremost, tow him into a factory ship, ignominiously, with shorn flukes and white swollen belly staring to the sky. A spirited account of this bustling industry is to be found in F. V. Morley and J. S. Hodgson's book. These authors are as candid as they are informative; there is little enough in their careful, unembellished pages to substantiate the suggestion on the jacket that modern whaling is a "high-hearted and romantic pursuit."

Morley, an Oxford Rhodes scholar saturated in the tradition come down from Ochter through Moby Dick, observed the business in northern latitudes where it is a waning enterprise. He brings to his consideration of the fleet and station of a Shetland island whaling company an easy familiarity with the legends that soar above Leviathan like his own spout, with science which has curtailed but also confirmed his greatness, and with the standardized ruthlessness of modern whaling, inevitably saddening to a romantic. He can even find place for a tentative and ingenious prognosis of "the next phase,"—capturing the whale alive, starting whale-farms, and breeding him. It is a fantastic but welcome digression. One turns again to it gladly after finishing the book, a little weary of wholesale slaughter with extermination implicit in the formula of whale-guns, cutting-machines, and steam. Morley's one hundred and

ESSAY REVIEWS

twenty pages of palatable and highly concentrated information are well-spiced pemmican of blubber and whale meat.

J. S. Hodgson, an expert moving-picture photographer without undue respect for the amenities of mere writing, is an observer of another stamp. His was the opportunity to observe the real high-seas fleet of the whaling industry; factory ships and catchers that steam from Norway ten thousand miles down into the Antarctic, manned by crews of absolutely matchless deep-water men.

These whalemens liked Hodgson, as was most natural. He was a craftsman, new-fangled, but in the true succession. While they fashioned "knebls" or spliced manilla hawsers, he tinkered with his high-speed shutters or polished his Pathe moving-picture camera. Hodgson used to brace his tripod against the gun platform in the very eyes of the whale-chaser and, when green seas were breaking over, and a big fin-whale coming under the gun, he would ply his trade while Bernsten or Skontorp at the gun above plied his. In the present volume truly magnificent illustrations—a huge blue whale caught just as the harpoon with forerunner still taut strikes him; or the Southern Maid coming in with eight whales alongside—prove the efficiency of both artificers.

Everything is here in "Whaling North and South" save poetry. And even that may some day be discerned again in the life of the men who hunt whales. But it must come from the inside, from an artist, who is in a whaler to run a winch, do a trick at the wheel, and stand the cold, interminable watches in the barrel. Young Oxford men aboard for a few weeks' stunt will not do; no one knows that better than Mr. Morley whose honest unwillingness to be considered anything but the most casual of observers—"You just go out with some Norwegians and watch them shoot," he explains)—is charming in a book where he had such chance for heroic posing. Nor is Hodgson the man to see *Moby Dick* again; he is far too much the absorbed specialist.

Perhaps somewhere in a country school in Norway a hulking, big-shouldered young schoolmaster with Ibsen and Knut Hamsun in his veins is even now fretting out his days. Some morning in a fit

WHALING NORTH AND SOUTH

of gloomy impatience he will sign on with the Southern Whaling Fleet. Scowling, white-faced, full of what Melville with intimate familiarity used to call the "hypos," he will watch the shores of his native fiord drift past. What will follow may be safely committed to the knees of the gods.

POEMS

SCHUYLER ASHLEY

TO A BREAKER

AROCRE BEACH TAHITI

You, who have rolled three
thousand miles,
Must spend your strength
among the sands,
Like all the waves who've
thundered in
And met their doom on
lonely strands.

Do you resent this sudden end
No cresting loveliness remaining,
And hate the sun that dries your trace,
E'en though beyond all
rivals straining;
Or do you feel that breaking
so,
And surging up high, white,
and free
You live, then gladly seething,
go
Back to the source of all,
the sea?

POEMS

VISIONS

Gray mist smeared across
a shining river's face,
A dead tree gaunt above
the gray,
And a smell that is all
that seems real about the place,
Visions come so easily today.

White tables, gleaming soft
with silver and with glass,
Flowers fragrant in the air,
Laughter heartless as a bell,
eyes that meet and pass,
Ladies, frail and arrogantly
fair.

Music, with the violins
singing true and sweet,
Kettle-drums that flout the
time,
And one crazy horn that
staggers like a drunkard on his feet,
Maddening the pulse like wine.

Life and Beauty, Love and Lust,
all in silk attire,
Such stuff are my dreams
today,
Though the sombre river
stinks and the mist climbs higher,
And the birds cry in the
same old way.

SCHUYLER ASHLEY

TWILIGHT AND THE CITY'S FACES

Twilight and the city's faces,
Paper scraps of white and gray,
Pass 'neath lights and show the traces
Living makes in human clay.

In some faces there is pain,
In some faces there is rest,
Some can never weep again,
Brazen faces, they are best.

Many are as smooth worn stones
Which have suffered wind and rain;
Others, polished stark—white bone,
Stare and stare in bleak disdain.

In some faces, I watch Death
Dancing at a cruel rate;
With drawn lips and quickened breath,
How they strive to keep his gait!

Even children that I see,
Radiant, lovely, flushed with pleasure,
Only betray poignantly
Where Death treads a gentler measure.

Drifting, aimless, through the gloom,
I seek, though it's shame to own,
Forlorn faces, those in whom
Lies mute proof I'm not alone.

* * * * *

Twilight and the city's faces,
Paper scraps of white and gray,
Pass 'neath lights and show the traces
Living makes in human clay.

POEMS

ON A SUN DIAL

These lines appear on a Sun Dial at the Barstow School, given as a memorial to his Sister Anne.

All you who love the wind and the rain,
And the sweet sun coursing with this shadow,
You who cherish friendship, honor
without stain,
Plays and pageants and a song's
refrain
Drifting 'cross a twilight meadow—
You for whom such loves are true,
Remember Anne, who loved them too.

SCHUYLER ASHLEY

LANTERNS IN A PARK

On the soft, black throat of night
Lantern chains like jewels swinging
Make bright music with their light,
Setting all the spectrum singing.
Cobalt blue of a lost Lagoon,
The red that dies in embers,
And the fairy green of a fugitive dream
Of the hills that a man remembers.

Lantern loveliness is brief,
Guttering all too soon to dark.
Where now is that gemmed relief
Spangling once this misty park?

Blackened and dim are the radiant
chains;
A lean yellow moon is peeping
Out of wrinkled clouds at the
paper shrouds
Where the lights may be only
sleeping.

POEMS

RAINY DAY

At my love's breast,
So oft caressed,
My lips are pressed,
adoringly.

Outside the rain
Plays a dull strain,
The world's refrain,
unceasingly.

So all the day
Faint shadows play,
Then fade away
insensibly.

HOSPITAL NURSES

Oh thousand-windowed high
 bright home of pain,
White-walled, cork carpeted, all
 too serene,
How debonair and sunny you
 remain,
Save when some opening door betrays
 a scream.
But they, who must the sponge and
 hyssop ply
Within this Golgotha, become at last
 insensate and, though wan hope
 bravely fly
Her tattered pennons from a shattered
 mast,
They marvel not; each day they see
 men die,
Torn-choking, clutching hard, from
 all mankind,
Dropping through lone dark worlds
 with each hoarse sigh.
Haply time blunts this, too, then
 nurses find
Stark terror in a travel magazine,
 And Fortitude mummied on a flickering
 screen.

POEMS

HARBOR NIGHT

The sun's red disk has dropped
into the sea,
Anchor lights glow, and one
star's ray
Sivers a ripple; I look on
the bay
Till I find the ship that
means home to me.
For, though all their lights
burn bright and fair,
A man soon learns to make
out his own pair.

* * * * *

The girls come out in
their dresses white,
They laugh, and their voices
are soft and sweet
Like the tired trade wind that
is almost asleep,
Like the heavy perfume of
flowers at night;
Oh these girls come from far
and wide,
But they all stroll down
by the harbor side.

SCHUYLER ASHLEY

From the shadow I watch
 them troop down to the quay,
Big white moths in the
 gas light flare,
Till I sight a faint blotch
 afar up the square,
The dress of the girl that
 means love to me;
For though all their dresses
 are cool and white,
My own dear girl shines
 out fair as a light.

